

FULL  
68 PAGES

AMAZING STORIES



NO  
55

# Sinister TALES

1'

"ENTER:  
The  
WATCHER!"

OF COURSE  
**DR. STRANGE**  
IS IN THIS ISH, TOO  
... BUT WE  
COULDN'T FIND  
ANY PLACE TO  
PUT HIM ON THE  
COVER!





The HUMAN TORCH and the Ever-Lovin' THING, FACE...

# "THE CHALLENGE OF... The WATCHER!"

LET YOUR ACTIVITIES  
CEASE! I BRING YOU  
A CHALLENGE... FROM  
ANOTHER GALAXY!!

NUTS! EVERY  
TIME WE  
FORGET TO LOCK  
THE DOOR, SOME  
NEW SCREWBALL  
COMES MARCHIN'  
IN TO-- HEY!!

TORCHY--  
LOOK!  
IT'S THE  
WATCHER!

CAREFUL, BEN!  
YOU ALMOST  
MADE ME MELT  
THAT  
FRAMMISTAT!

WE ENVY YOU! WE ALREADY  
READ THIS FANTASY-FILLED  
EXTRAVAGANZA, SO WE KNOW  
THE THRILLS AND WONDERMENT  
WHICH AWAIT YOU! READ IT  
SLOWLY-- SAVOR IT-- LINGER  
LOVINGLY OVER EACH RING-  
A-DING WORD, EACH POWER-  
PACKED PICTURE! YOU'LL BE  
GLAD YOU DID!

SOUL-STIRRING SCRIPT BY:  
STAN LEE

BREATH-TAKING ART BY:  
BOB POWELL

EYE-POPPING INKING BY:  
WALLACE WOOD

HEART-RENDING LETTERING BY:  
ARTIE SIMEK





I BID YOU SUMMON YOUR OTHER TWO PARTNERS! MY CHALLENGE IS FOR ALL **FOUR OF YOU!**

BUT, REED AND SUE ARE OUT! NO TELLING *WHEN* THEY'LL BE BACK!

WHAT'S WITH THIS **CHALLENGE JAZZ**, ANYWAY?



THEN, I HAVE NO CHOICE! I MUST OFFER THE CHALLENGE TO THE **TWO OF YOU**, ALONE-- ALTHOUGH THE CHANCES FOR YOUR **SURVIVAL** WILL BE **SORELY AGAINST YOU!**

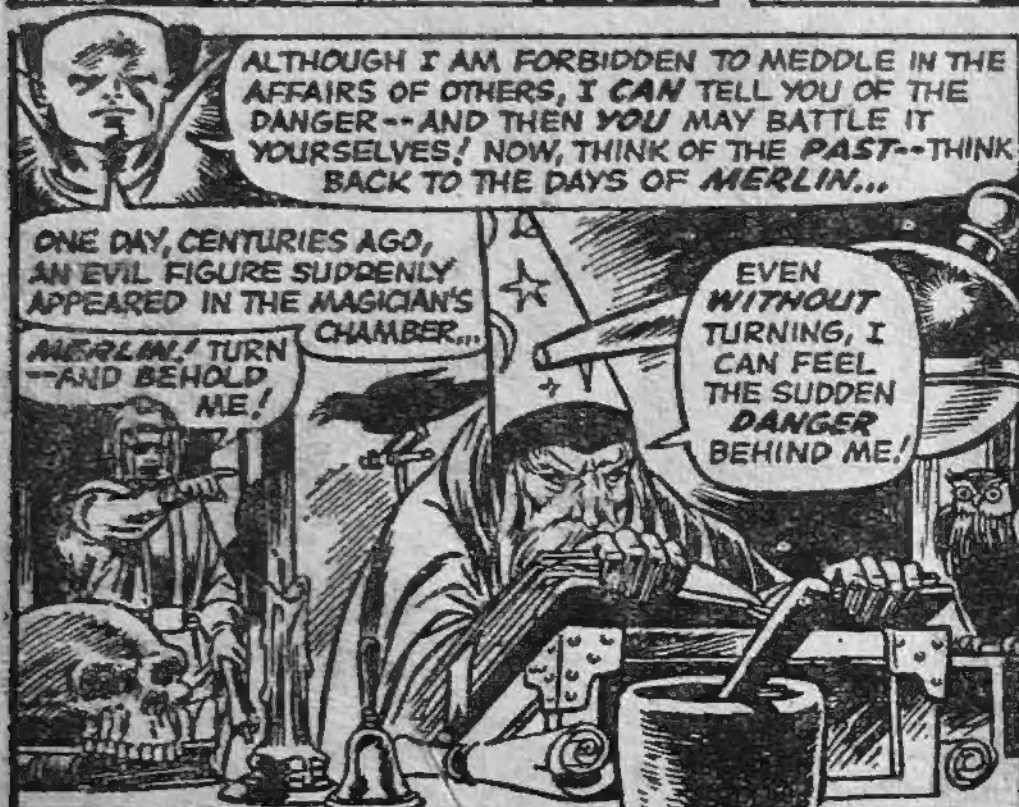
AS YOU KNOW, I AM ONE OF THE IMMORTAL **WATCHERS!** MY TASK IS TO OBSERVE THE HAPPENINGS OF THIS SECTION OF THE UNIVERSE, BUT NEVER TO INTERFERE!



YET, A MENACE HAS ARISEN WHICH IS SO DANGEROUS, SO DEADLY, THAT IT WILL, IF UNCHECKED, DESTROY YOUR ENTIRE WORLD AS YOU NOW KNOW IT!

OKAY, OKAY! WE GET THE MESSAGE! IT'S TIME FOR TORCHY 'N ME TO SAVE THE WORLD AGAIN, HUH? AND WE PROBABLY GOTTA DO IT BEFORE DINNER-TIME, TOO!

**HOOO BOY!** YOU'D BETTER CLUE US IN!



ALTHOUGH I AM FORBIDDEN TO MEDDLE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS, I CAN TELL YOU OF THE DANGER--AND THEN YOU MAY BATTLE IT YOURSELVES! NOW, THINK OF THE **PAST--**THINK BACK TO THE DAYS OF **MERLIN...**

ONE DAY, CENTURIES AGO, AN EVIL FIGURE SUDDENLY APPEARED IN THE MAGICIAN'S CHAMBER...

**MERLIN!** TURN--AND BEHOLD ME!

EVEN WITHOUT TURNING, I CAN FEEL THE SUDDEN **DANGER** BEHIND ME!



YOU ARE NOT OF THIS AGE--NOT OF THIS TIME! YOU HAVE COME FROM--THE **FUTURE!**

AH, YOUR WISDOM IS TRULY NOT OVERRATED, MAGICIAN! BUT, IT CANNOT SAVE YOU FROM ME! I AM **KANG**, MASTER OF TIME TRAVEL! I HAVE COME FROM THE **25TH CENTURY** TO CONQUER THE COURT OF KING ARTHUR--TO RULE IN HIS STEAD!



**NO! YOU MUST NOT! IF YOU CHANGE THE PAST--IT WILL DESTROY THE FUTURE! ALL WHO LIVE IN THE CENTURIES THAT FOLLOW MAY PERISH! I CANNOT PERMIT IT!**

YOU HAVE NO CHOICE! YOU ARE POWERLESS TO STOP ME!



WE SHALL SEE WHO IS POWERLESS! I SHALL CONJURE UP AN ARMY OF **DEMONS**, TO DRIVE YOU BACK TO YOUR OWN AGE! **ATTACK HIM, MY BEAUTIES!** IN THE NAME OF **MERLIN!**



**BAH!** YOUR MEDIEVAL PARLOR TRICKS ARE **USELESS!** SEE HOW MY OWN MASTERY OF 25TH CENTURY **SCIENCE** CAN BANISH YOUR DEMONS WITH A GESTURE!





BY ALL THE SPELLS OF SORCERY, YOUR POWER IS THE GREATEST I HAVE EVER WITNESSED! BUT I SHALL NEVER YIELD TO THEE! LET THE FURY OF THE ELEMENTS BRING YOU TO YOUR KNEES!

YOU WEARY MY PATIENCE, MERLIN! YOUR PUNY EFFORTS ARE PATHETIC TO A MAN WHO HAS COMMAND OVER ALL FORMS OF NATURAL SCIENCE!



WITH ONE SIMPLE GESTURE--ONE SWEEP OF MY PALM-SIZED **ENERGY DEFLECTOR**, I CAN COMPLETELY REVERSE THE FORCE OF YOUR ATTACK, CAUSING IT TO STRIKE YOU INSTEAD OF ME!

OOOOON--



IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU COMPELLED ME TO RESORT TO SUCH MEASURES, BUT **KANG**, THE MASTER OF TIME TRAVEL-- MUST NEVER BE DEFIED!

YOU SHALL LIVE, MERLIN! BUT, YOU SHALL LIVE IN AN AGE RULED BY **KANG**, THE CONQUEROR! YOU SHALL LIVE IN A **DUNGEON**, AS A SYMBOL OF MY TOTAL VICTORY!



IT WILL BE A SIMPLE MATTER FOR ME TO PREPARE A SPECIAL CELL, CAPABLE OF RESISTING ANY OF YOUR MAGICAL ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE!



THIS ENDS **PHASE ONE** OF MY PLAN OF CONQUEST! NEXT, I SHALL TAKE COMMAND OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE--AFTER WHICH THE THRONE OF **KING ARTHUR** HIMSELF SHALL BE **MINE**!

AND, BY CHANGING THE **PAST**, I WILL GAIN REVENGE ON MY ENEMIES IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY--- ENEMIES SUCH AS THE **FANTASTIC FOUR**--BECAUSE THEY CANNOT **EXIST** ONCE THE PAST HAS BEEN ALTERED!



DO YOU BEGIN TO PERCEIVE THE DANGER? IF **KANG** CHANGES THE **PAST**--THEN THE **PRESENT** MUST CHANGE, TOO--FOR IT IS **BUILT UPON** THE PAST!

EVEN AS I **SPEAK** TO YOU, I CAN OBSERVE HIM CARRYING OUT THE REMAINDER OF HIS DEADLY PLAN....!

I CHALLENGE ANY OR ALL OF ARTHUR'S KNIGHTS TO MORTAL COMBAT!

WE HASTEN TO ACCEPT, INSOLENT STRANGER!



MOUNT THY STEED,  
ARROGANT KNAVE!  
PREPARE TO MEET  
THY FATE, IN THE  
NAME OF NOBLE  
KING ARTHUR!

HAN! I SHALL DEFEAT EVERY  
ONE OF YOU, AND THEN I'LL  
REPLACE THE KING HIMSELF!

I CANNOT FAIL, CONSIDERING THAT  
MY INNOCENT-LOOKING LANCE  
CONTAINS COUNTLESS 25TH CENTURY  
ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENTS AND  
DEVICES!



"TIME AND SPACE ARE ALL THE SAME  
TO THE WATCHER! EVEN NOW, I SEE  
THE EVIL KANG USING HIS INFALLIBLE  
LANCE TO SWEEP HIS FOES BEFORE  
HIM--!"

AT THE PRESS OF A BUTTON, AN INVISIBLE FORCE  
BLAST UNSEATS MY CLUMSY, BEWILDERED OPPONENT!



"IT IS AS I HAVE FEARED! NOTHING CAN STOP THE FEARSOME MENACE FROM THE FAR DISTANT  
FUTURE!"



"IT IS ENDED! KANG IS VICTORIOUS! HE  
SENDS ARTHUR AND THE LOYAL KNIGHTS OF  
THE ROUND TABLE INTO EXILE, WHERE  
THEY CANNOT DEFEY HIM ANY LONGER!"

REMEMBER YOUR  
PLEDGES! YOU MAY  
NEVER RETURN UNTIL  
I PERMIT IT! SUCH  
ARE THE TERMS OF  
MY VICTORY!

A KNIGHT OF THE  
TABLE NEVER  
BREAKS HIS  
SOLENN WORD!  
FAREWELL,  
TRIUMPHANT  
ONE!



GOOD! NOW, WITH ARTHUR AND THOSE WHO WERE LOYAL  
TO HIM, GONE, I CAN SEIZE CONTROL OF THE MANY WHO  
REMAIN!

HAIL TO  
MIGHTY  
KANG!

WHERE THE  
GREAT KANG  
LEADS, WE  
SHALL EVER  
FOLLOW!







"AND NOW, KANG SITS IN THE PLACE OF KING ARTHUR, AT THE LEGENDARY ROUND TABLE!"

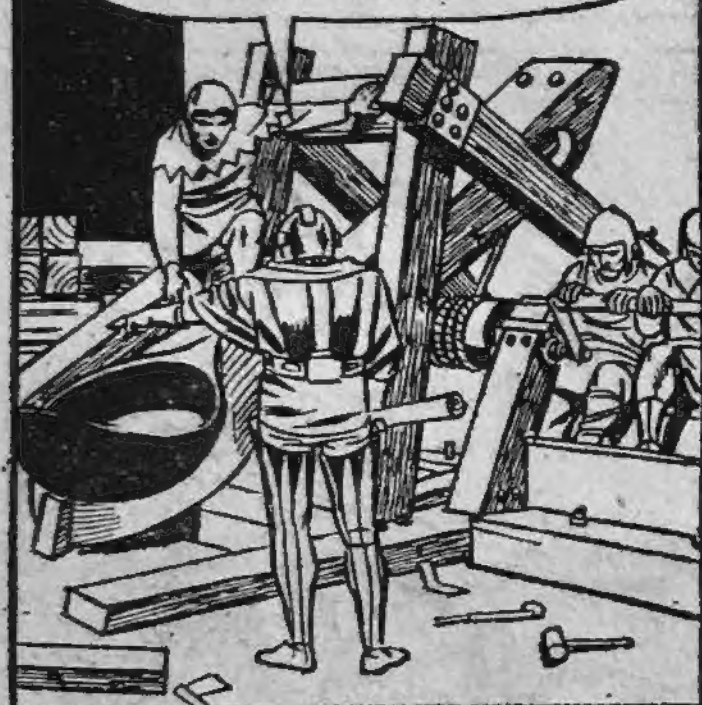
I'M STILL NOT SATISFIED! IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO RULE ARTHUR'S COURT-- I MUST CONQUER ALL OF EARTH!

YOU WILL BUILD ME WEAPONS --MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY YOU HAVE EVER DREAMED OF!

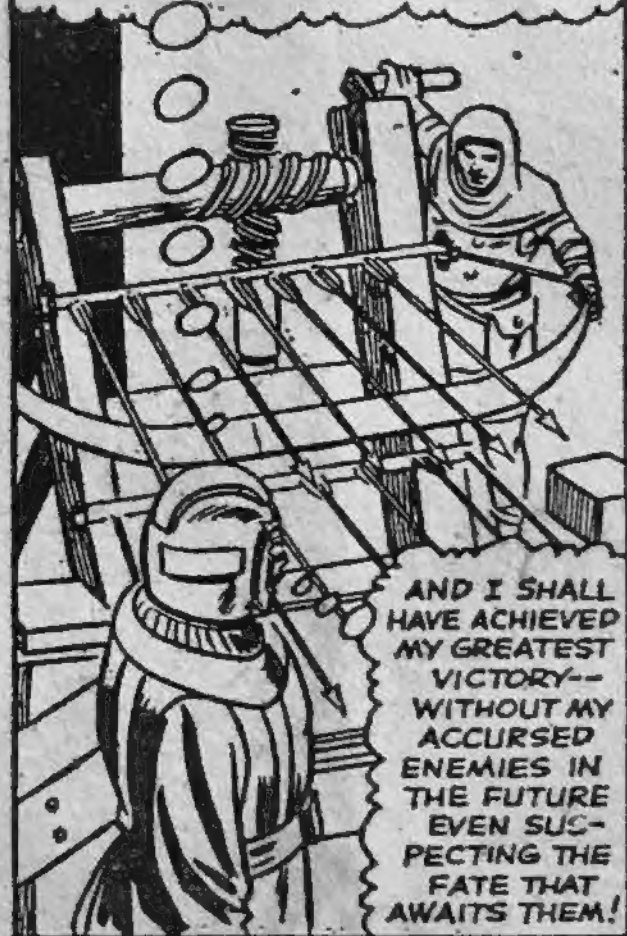
OUR NEW LORD SEEMS TROUBLED!

"KANG WASTES NOT A MINUTE! HE ORDERS THE ARMORERS AND WEAPONRY MASTERS TO CREATE CATAPULTS, MULTIPLE-FIRING ARCHERY DEVICES, AND A HOST OF OTHER WEAPONS WITH WHICH HE INTENDS TO BECOME RULER OF THE ENTIRE PLANET!"

FASTER! FASTER! I CANNOT WAIT FOR THE SUPREME MOMENT WHEN I SHALL CHANGE THE COURSE OF HUMAN HISTORY ITSELF! ALL I NEED DO IS WIN MY FIRST BATTLE VICTORY, AND THE SANDS OF TIME WILL BEGIN SHIFTING!



AND, ONCE THEY SHIFT-- ONCE THE TIME STREAM HERE IN THE PAST HAS BEEN ALTERED, THEN THE FUTURE CAN NO LONGER EXIST AS IT NOW DOES! THERE WILL BE NO FANTASTIC FOUR-- NO AVENGERS-- NOTHING THAT LIVES WILL REMAIN THE SAME!



AND I SHALL HAVE ACHIEVED MY GREATEST VICTORY-- WITHOUT MY ACCURSED ENEMIES IN THE FUTURE EVEN SUSPECTING THE FATE THAT AWAITS THEM!



"THE DANGER IS AS GREAT AS I HAVE FEARED--- AND TIME IS RUNNING OUT!"

NOW I AM READY! NO ARMY CAN STAND AGAINST MY MIGHTY CREATIONS!

"THIS ARMY IS ASSEMBLED! NO FORCE IN EXISTENCE CAN STOP IT! AND I, THE WATCHER, AM PLEDGED NEVER TO INTERFERE--!"



ONWARD!! WE SHALL SWEEP ACROSS THE FACE OF EARTH LIKE THE STORM, DRIVING ALL BEFORE US!!

WE CAN WAIT NO LONGER! IF THE WORLD OF THE PRESENT IS TO REMAIN UNCHANGED-- IF MANKIND IS NOT TO VANISH FROM THE TWENTIETH CENTURY-- KANG MUST BE TURNED BACK NOW!

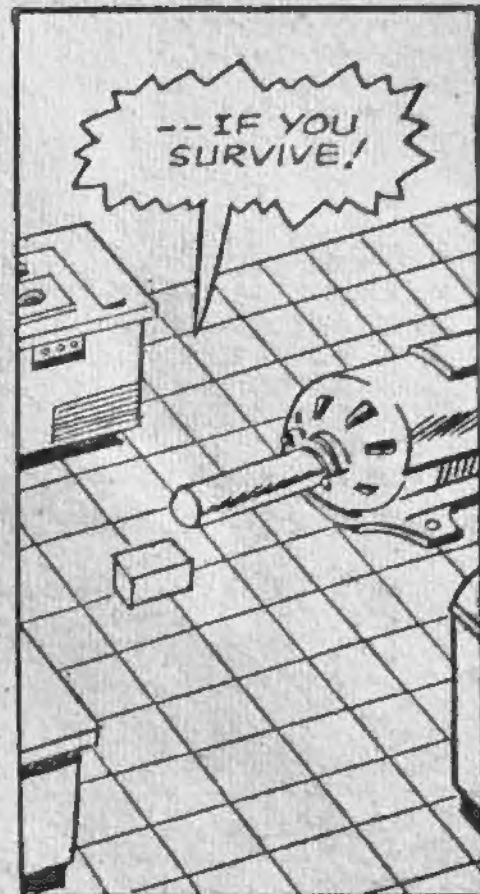
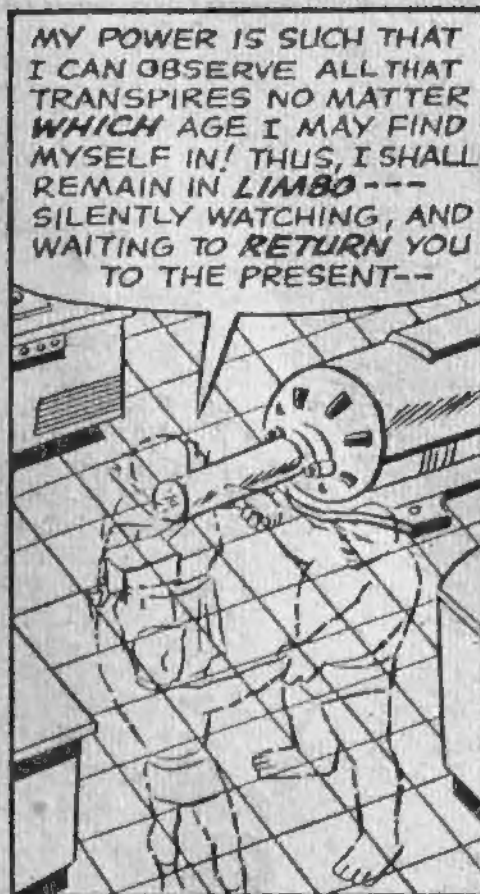
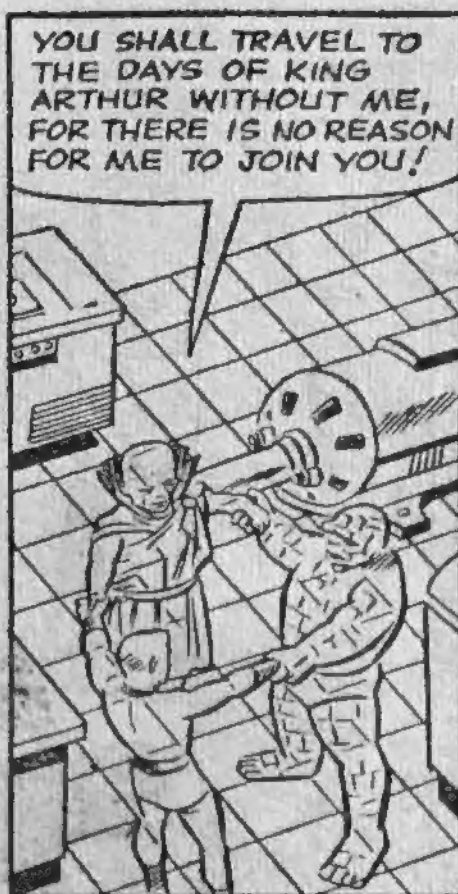


WHAT A TIME FOR REED AND SUE TO BE OUT APARTMENT-HUNTING!

WHO NEEDS 'EM! I BEEN ITCHIN' TO MEET UP WITH THAT CORNBALL KANG AGAIN AND GIVE 'IM SOME KNUCKLES TO CHEW ON! LET'S GO!

SAY, HOLD IT! HOW DO WE GET TO THE PAST??









UH OH! THEY'RE WINDING UP SOME KINDA MULTIPLE-ARROW FIRING MACHINE!

I'LL JUST BURN THE WINDLASS AND RELEASE THE ARROWS TOWARD KANG'S OWN MEN, BEFORE THEY CAN BE AIMED AT BLUE EYES!

WHILE YOU FOOLISHLY EXHAUST YOUR FLAME ON SUCH CHILDISH MANEUVERS, I'LL SEND MY OWN DAZZLING CREATION AGAINST THE BRAINLESS THING--!

FLEE! WE ARE VERILY ATTACKED BY A FLYING FIEND!!



GO, INVINCIBLE ONE! SLAY THE ORANGE-SKINNED FOOL WHO DARES CHALLENGE KANG!

WELL, FER THE LOVE OF AUNT PETUNIA! IS THAT WALKIN' BEANPOLE SUPPOSED TA MAKE MY DAINTY LITTLE KNEES TREMBLE WITH FRIGHT?? YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN'!!



THE ORANGE-SKINNED ONE MUST PERISH! MIGHTY KANG HAS SO COMMANDED!

YA MEAN IT AINT A GAG?? YA WANNA FIGHT ME FOR REAL??

MISTER, YOU MUST HAVE ROCKS IN YER HEAD!

BOY! TORCHY COULD MAKE A HOT ROD OUTTA ALL THIS STUFF!



GOOD! THEY'VE BOTH BECOME OVER-CONFIDENT! NOW I'LL DEFEAT THEM EASILY WITH MY OWN WEAPONS OF THE FUTURE!



FIRST, ONE SINGLE COMPRESSED-AIR BLAST FROM MY SIMULATED "LANCE" WILL COMPLETELY EXTINGUISH THE TORCH'S FLAME!

WHOOSH!

UHHH! I WAS CARELESS! I FLEW TOO CLOSE TO KANG!









MINUTES LATER...

NOW THAT I AM BACK AMONGST MY OWN POTIONS AND CHARMS, THE WORLD ONCE AGAIN SHALL SEE THE POWER OF **MERLIN THE MAGICIAN!** BUT, FIRST, I MUST REPAY **THEE, YOUNG STRANGER--!**



LET THE WORK OF KANG BE **UNDONE** UPON **THEE!** **THUS SPEAKS MERLIN!**

I CAN FEEL THE POWER SURGING BACK INTO MY BODY!

I CAN FLAME ON AGAIN-- I KNOW IT! I KNOW IT!



**FLAME ON!**

**HOT DIGGITY! I'M THE HUMAN TORCH AGAIN!**

THEN GO THOU! DESTROY THE EVIL KANG! MERLIN SHALL BE WITH THEE-- IN SPIRIT, AND IN FELLOWSHIP!

MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, THE **HARD-PRESSED THING** BATTLES ON, AGAINST EVER-INCREASING ODDS, AS HIS COURAGEOUS HEART SEEMS DEAD WITHIN HIM-- DUE TO THE APPARENT **DESERTION** OF HIS **TEEN-AGE PARTNER--!**

THE WITLESS **THING** HAS NOT BRAINS ENOUGH TO REALIZE HE IS **BEATEN!** I HAD WANTED MY OWN **KNIGHTS** TO DEFEAT HIM, BUT I SHALL HAVE TO DO IT MYSELF, WITH THIS **ATOMIC-POWERED "LANCE"** FROM THE **25<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY!**

I'D HAVE STAKED MY **LIFE** ON THE **KID!** WHAT MADE 'IM **DO IT--?** WHAT MADE 'IM **RUN OUT ON ME??**



THEN, SUDDENLY--A FLASHING, FLYING, FLAMING FIGURE BURSTS UPON THE SCENE WITH AN EAR-SPLITTING VICTORY CRY--!

**CLOBBER 'EM, BENJY BOY!** GIVE 'EM ONE FOR OL' MATCH-HEAD! LET'S GO, **BLUE-EYES!!**

THE **TORCH--** FLAMING AGAIN!! BUT, **HOW--??**



**TORCHIE!!** YA DIDN'T CHICKEN OUT ON ME! **HOOD BOY--** NOW WE'LL REALLY GO TA TOWN!



MISS ME, KANG? YOU SHOULD A **KNOWN** I'D BE BACK!



WITHIN SECONDS, THE INDESCRIBABLY POWERFUL *THING* HAS SCATTERED HIS FOES ALL OVER THE LANDSCAPE, AS THOSE WHO REMAIN RUN FOR COVER IN PANICKY DESPERATION!

GADZOOKS! HE LIFTS BOTH MY STEED AND MYSELF AS THOUGH WE BE VERILY WEIGHTLESS!

YOU'RE THE LAST OF 'EM, BUTTERCUP! SO, JUST HOLD ON TIGHT WHILE I SEND YA SAILIN' INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER TO JOIN THE REST OF THEM RUSTY RUNAWAYS!!

HEADS UP, YOU CLOWNS!! HERE'S A LITTLE SPECIAL DELIVERY FROM ME TO KANG!

THEN, FINALLY...

THAT DOES IT, BUDDY BOY! BUT KANG HIMSELF IS TRYIN' TO ESCAPE! I'LL GO AFTER 'IM!

DON'T KNOCK YERSELF OUT, JUNIOR! I'LL MAKE IT EASY FOR YA! JUST HOP INTO THAT BOILIN' CAULDRON AND LEAVE EVERYTHIN' TO YER BASHFUL BUDDY!



OKAY, CHUCKLES! THIS IS JUST LIKE A WARM BATH TO ME! WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

I'LL GIVE YA THREE GUESSES, SONNY BOY! JUST SIT TIGHT AND ENJOY IT!



OKAY, KANG!! IT'S JUST YOU 'N ME NOW! AND THIS TIME MY FLAME'S STAYING ON-- LONG ENOUGH TO OBLITERATE YOU!!

YOU YOUNG FOOL! I'VE STILL GOT ENOUGH WEAPONS FROM THE FUTURE TO MAKE YOU WISH YOU HAD NEVER HEARD OF KANG THE CONQUEROR! IT'S MERELY A QUESTION OF DECIDING WHICH ONE TO SLAY YOU WITH!

BULL'S EYE!

BLAST IT! HE REACHED HERE FIRST, CUTTING OFF MY ESCAPE!





BUT, AT THAT MOMENT, THE STRONG, PIERCING VOICE OF MERLIN RINGS OUT, LOUD AND CLEAR--!

KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE!! FORSAKE YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO THE EVIL KANG! ARTHUR MUST BE RETURNED TO HIS THRONE! **THUS SPEAKS MERLIN!!**

MERLIN HAS RETURNED! WE MUST OBEY HIM!

DEATH TO KANG!

IT IS MERLIN! HE HAS OVERCOME KANG!

THE TORCH CAN WAIT! I'VE GOT TO DESTROY MERLIN BEFORE THEIR EYES! ONLY THEN WILL THEY SERVE ME AGAIN!

BUT, MY DESTRUCTIVE RAY DOESN'T WORK! WHAT IS WRONG? WHAT HAS GONE AMISS??!

THEY'RE CLOSING IN ON ME! MERLIN HAS TURNED THEM AGAINST ME!

SURPRISED, KANGIE?? MERLIN FOUND WHERE YOUR TIME-TRAVEL SHIP WAS HIDDEN BY LOOKING IN HIS CRYSTAL BALL! THEN, HE WENT TO IT AND DRAINED THE POWER OUT OF YOUR ENERGIZER!

THAT'S WHY MY WEAPONS DO NOT WORK!! THEY ARE USELESS WITHOUT THE ENERGIZER!

DEATH TO KANG!

ONCE AGAIN THE TORCH AND THE THING HAVE THWARTED MY PLAN! BUT, THEY'LL NEVER CONQUER ME! I'LL ESCAPE THEM YET!

AWAY, RABBLE! NONE CAN OVERCOME KANG!

THAT'S A REAL DRAMATIC SPEECH THERE, BOY--ARE YOU THE GUY WHO WRITES DIALOGUE FOR THOR?

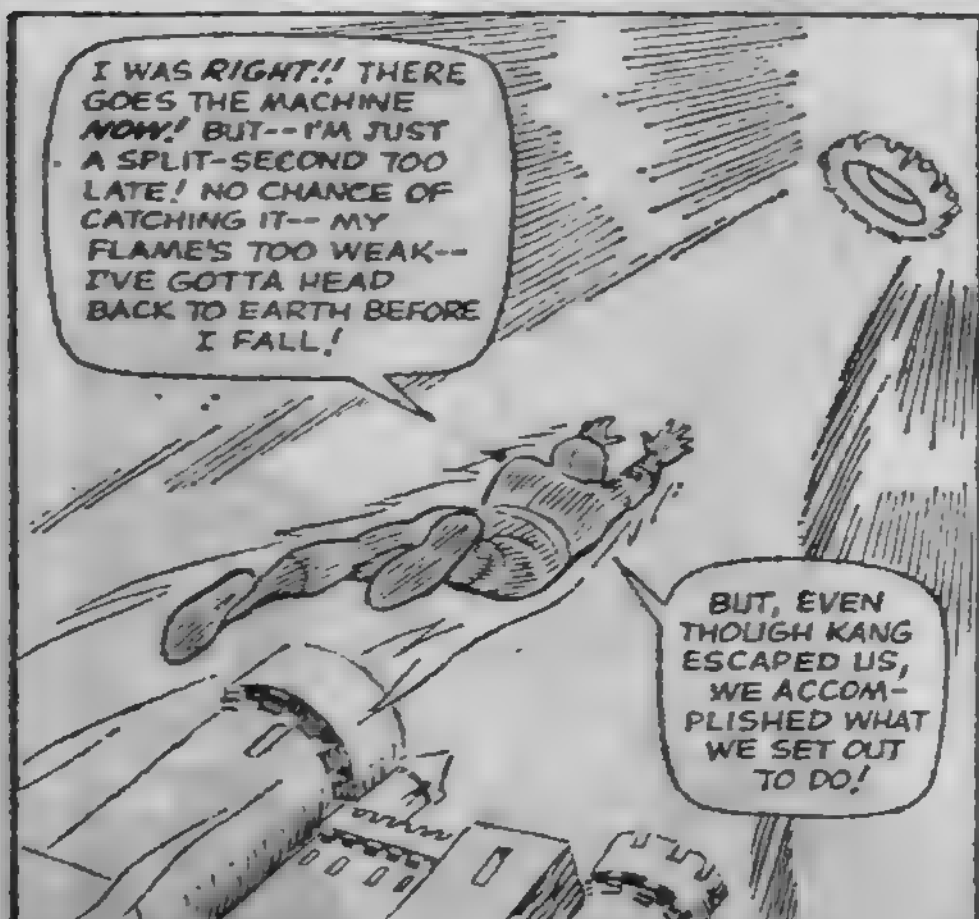
WHUP!

HEY, WAIT UP! WHERE YA GOIN', SUNBEAM?? I'M NOT THRU WITH YA YET!

THE THING ON ONE SIDE OF ME-- THE TORCH SWOOPING DOWN FROM ABOVE-- AND A VENGEFUL ARMY OF KNIGHTS ATTACKING FROM THE REAR!

ANY OTHER FOE WOULD WHIMPER IN ABJECT SURRENDER-- BUT I AM KANG, THE CONQUEROR-- KANG, THE MASTER OF TIME! KANG-- THE UNSEATABLE!!







# DR. STRANGE

MASTER  
OF THE  
MYSTIC ARTS!

## EARTH BE MY BATTLEGROUND

AT LONG LAST, AFTER  
AN OCCULT JOURNEY  
THRU NAMELESS  
DIMENSIONS, WEARY  
AND SICK AT HEART,  
DR. STRANGE RETURNS  
TO HIS NATIVE WORLD--  
REALIZING THE TIME  
HAS COME TO FACE  
EVIL BARON MORDO  
ONCE MORE!

MY JOURNEY IS ENDED!  
I'VE BRIDGED THE  
ENDLESS GAP BETWEEN  
DIMENSIONS! I'M BACK  
ON EARTH!



WRITTEN BY MARVEL'S  
OWN LIVING LEGEND,  
**STAN LEE**

ILLUSTRATED BY MARVEL'S  
OWN UNSUNG GENIUS,  
**STEVE DITKO**

LETTERED BY MARVEL'S  
OWN BEAMING PIXIE,  
**ARTIE SIMEK**



I'LL RETRIEVE MY STREET CLOTHES WHERE I LEFT THEM!

BUT, I CANNOT YET RETURN TO MY DWELLING, FOR MORDO'S DEMONS ARE STILL ON GUARD!

YET, I STILL POSSESS ONE ADVANTAGE! MORDO HAS NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT I HAVE RETURNED!

I SHALL USE THESE PRECIOUS MOMENTS TO VISIT THE AILING ANCIENT ONE!

MINUTES LATER... FIRST, I NEED A HAVEN--A PLACE WHERE MY BODY WILL BE SAFE!

THIS SIDESTREET HOTEL WILL SERVE THE PURPOSE AS WELL AS ANY OTHER! ALL I NEED DO IS DRAW THE SHADES!



AND NOW, WHILE MY HELPLESS PHYSICAL BODY REMAINS TOTALLY MOTIONLESS, MY ECTOPLASMIC SPIRIT FORM SHALL FLY TO THE SANCTUM OF MY VENERABLE MASTER!



THE QUICKEST WAY TO REACH TIBET IS BY JOURNEYING THRU THE CORE OF EARTH!



FORTUNATELY, NO HUMANS CAN SEE ME WHILE I OCCUPY MY SPIRIT FORM!

TIME, DISTANCE, AND PHYSICAL OBSTACLES ARE VIRTUALLY MEANINGLESS TO ONE'S ECTOPLASMIC FORM! THIS, SCANT SECONDS LATER...

I HAVE ARRIVED!

BY THE SEVEN RINGS OF RAGGADORR, LET MY FORM BE VISIBLE TO THOSE WITHIN THIS CHAMBER!

YOUNG MASTER! YOU HAVE RETURNED! THE VISHANT! BE PRAISED!



THE ANCIENT ONE HAS BEEN IN A COMA SINCE YOU LEFT! EACH DAY HE GROWS WEAKER!

BUT, IT IS BEYOND MY POOR POWERS TO AID HIM! I COULD ONLY PRAY FOR YOUR RETURN!

HE IS WEAK! HE NEEDS STRENGTH!







MANY TIMES, IN HIS COMA, HE MUTTERED A WORD-- ONLY ONE WORD, OVER AND OVER AGAIN! THE WORD-- ETERNITY!

NO TIME FOR THAT NOW! I MUST REPLENISH HIS STRENGTH QUICKLY-- BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!



LET THE POWER OF MY ENCHANTED AMULET BATHE THEE, VENERABLE MASTER! LET ITS STRENGTH BECOME THY STRENGTH!

ENOUGH! TOO STRONG A DOSE COULD PROVE FATAL!

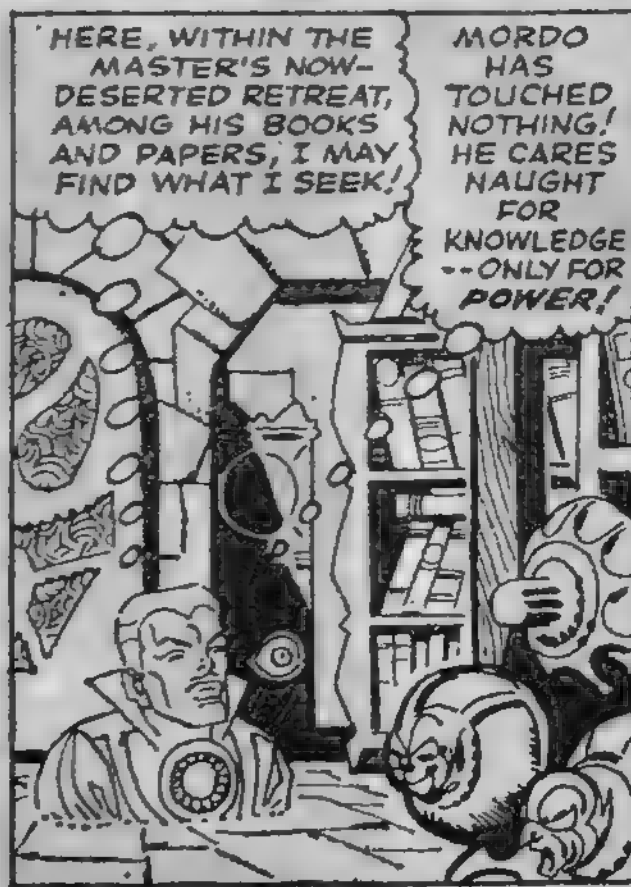


I MUST GO NOW! I SHALL RETURN PERIODICALLY TO RE-ADMINISTER THE AMULET'S POWER!

TILL THEN, GUARD HIM WELL, FAITHFUL ONE-- WHILE I PONDER THE MEANING OF--- ETERNITY!

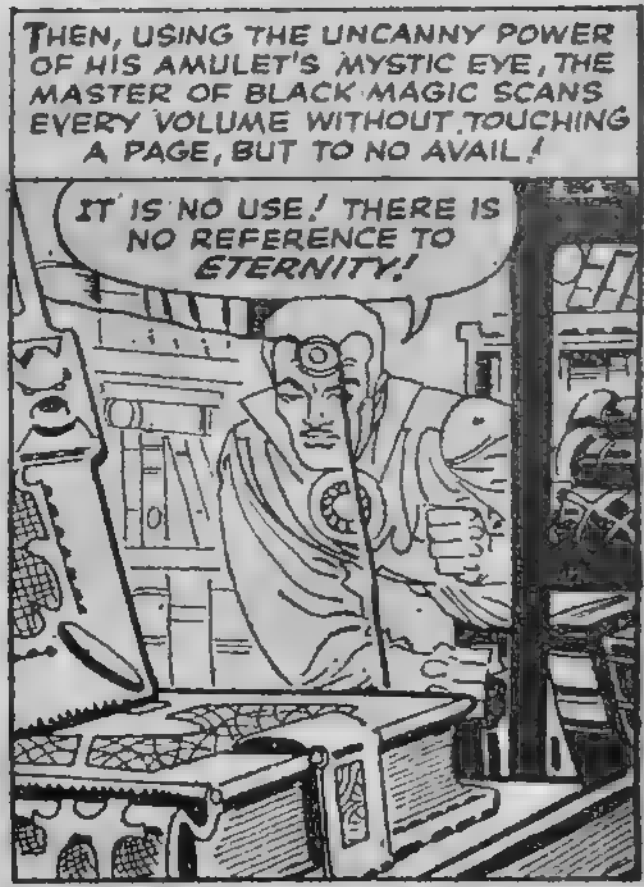


MORDO'S EVIL SPIRITS STILL SEARCH THE CAVERNS BENEATH THIS LAND, SEEKING THE ANCIENT ONE! MAY THE VAPORS OF VALTORR BLIND THEIR EYES!



HERE, WITHIN THE MASTER'S NOW-DESERTED RETREAT, AMONG HIS BOOKS AND PAPERS, I MAY FIND WHAT I SEEK!

MORDO HAS TOUCHED NOTHING! HE CARES NAUGHT FOR KNOWLEDGE-- ONLY FOR POWER!



THEN, USING THE UNCANNY POWER OF HIS AMULET'S MYSTIC EYE, THE MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC SCANS EVERY VOLUME WITHOUT TOUCHING A PAGE, BUT TO NO AVAIL!

IT IS NO USE! THERE IS NO REFERENCE TO ETERNITY!



AND, AS THE EYE RETURNS TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE WITHIN THE ENCHANTED GEM...

IF THE MASTER SAID IT, IT MUST BE IMPORTANT! I SHALL NOT REST TILL I LEARN ITS MEANING!



BUT, AS THE SILENT ECTOPLASMIC FIGURE GLIDES THRU A WALL...

I FORGOT TO DISSOLVE THE SPELL OF VISIBILITY WHICH I CAST OVER MYSELF! ONE OF MORDO'S SPIRITS SEES ME!



AND, AT THAT VERY INSTANT...

A SIGNAL! ONE OF MY SPIRITS HAS FOUND HIM! AT LAST!



INSTANTLY, BARON MORDO ALSO RESORTS TO HIS SPIRIT FORM, AND THEN...

AFTER HIM, MORDO! HAVE NO FEAR! I, THE DREAD DORMAMMU, SHALL FEED YOU ENDLESS MYSTIC POWER AS YOU NEED IT!



THUS, WITHIN SECONDS, THE EVIL MORDO SIGHTS HIS QUARRY--!

I SEE HIM! DIRECTLY AHEAD!

MORDO! WITH HIS SPIRITS! I'M TRAPPED!



AND, AN INDESCRIBABLE DISTANCE AWAY, IN THE MACABRE DARK DIMENSION, DORMAMMU WATCHES HUNGRILY...

MORDO MUST TRIUMPH THIS TIME! I MUST HAVE STRANGE DEAD!



ONCE HE IS GONE, I'LL BE FREE OF MY OATH! I'LL BE ABLE TO COME TO EARTH IN PERSON, AND CONQUER IT WITH MY MYSTIC SPELLS!

AGAIN THE DREADED ONE HURLS HIS POWER AGAINST THE NOBLE DR. STRANGE!



DR. STRANGE BEFRIENDED ME! I MUST AID HIM NOW! THERE IS ONLY ONE THING THAT CAN SAVE HIM!

NO MATTER WHAT THE COST--I MUST DO IT!



MEANWHILE...

IT'S TOO CRAMPED DOWN HERE! I MUST BATTLE MY WAY TO THE SURFACE ONCE MORE-- I CAN BE TOO EASILY TRAPPED WITHIN THESE CAVERNS!

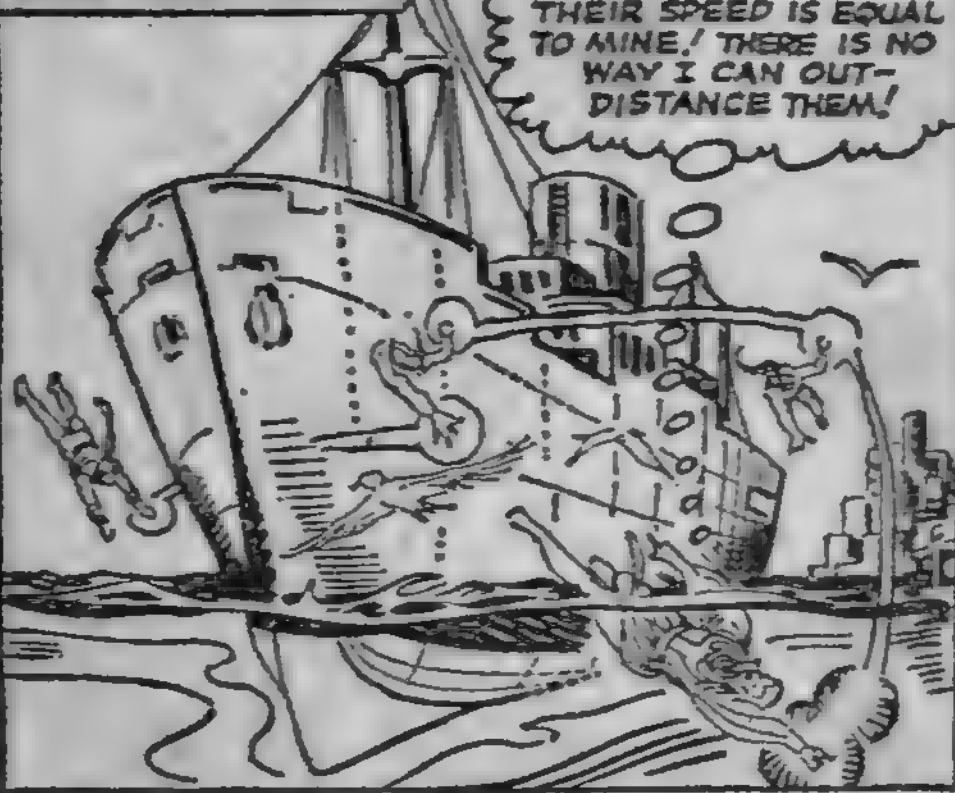


YOU WON'T ESCAPE ME THIS TIME, STRANGE! THERE IS NO PLACE YOU CAN GO WHERE I CANNOT FOLLOW!



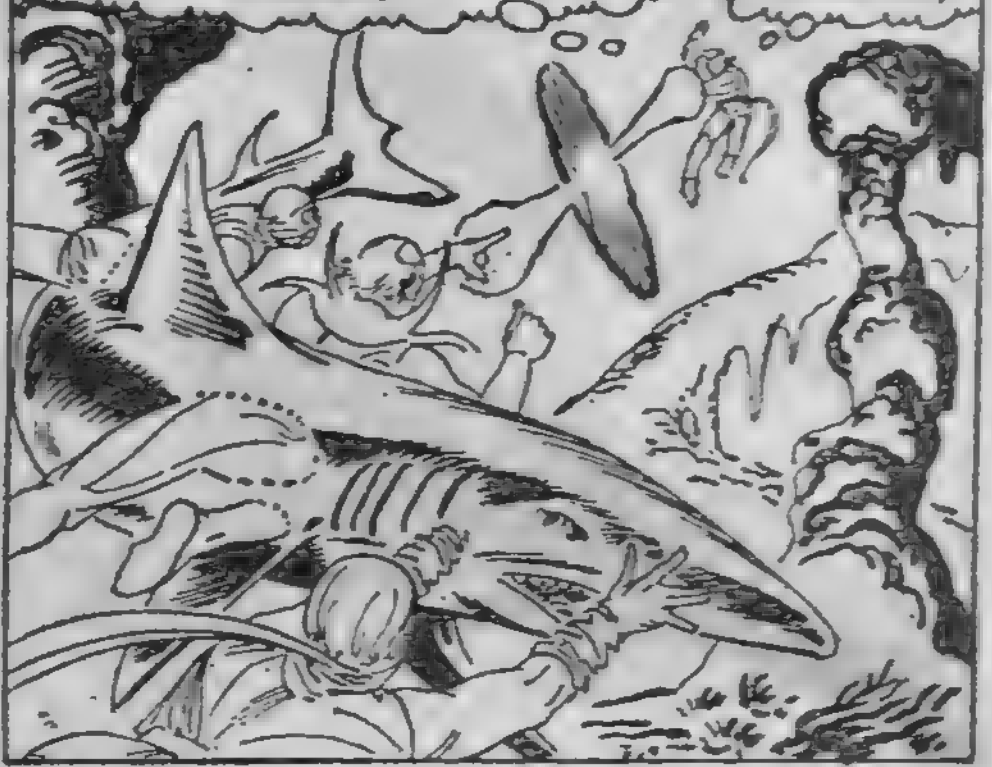


CLEAR ACROSS THE SURFACE OF EARTH, THE ECTOPLASMIC FIGURES SPEED, INVISIBLE TO ALL SAVE EACH OTHER...



THEIR SPEED IS EQUAL TO MINE! THERE IS NO WAY I CAN OUT-DISTANCE THEM!

AND MORDO CAN TRANSFER HIS POWER TO ANY OF HIS SPIRITS AT WILL! SO THEY ARE ALL EQUALLY STRONG!



BUT, I MUST NOT DESPAIR! TOO MUCH IS AT STAKE!

WHILE BACK IN THE DARK DIMENSION...

BEYOND THIS BARRIER LIVE THE MINDLESS ONES, HELD PRISONERS ONLY BY THE POWER OF THE PREAD DORMAMMU!



"THE MINDLESS ONES!" BRAINLESS CREATURES OF ALMOST INCALCULABLE POWER, LIVING ONLY TO FIGHT, TO RAVAGE, TO DESTROY!!



ONLY DORMAMMU'S MYSTIC BARRIER KEEP THEM AT BAY! BUT, THIS DEVICE WHICH I HAVE SEIZED, CAN WEAKEN THE BARRIER--!



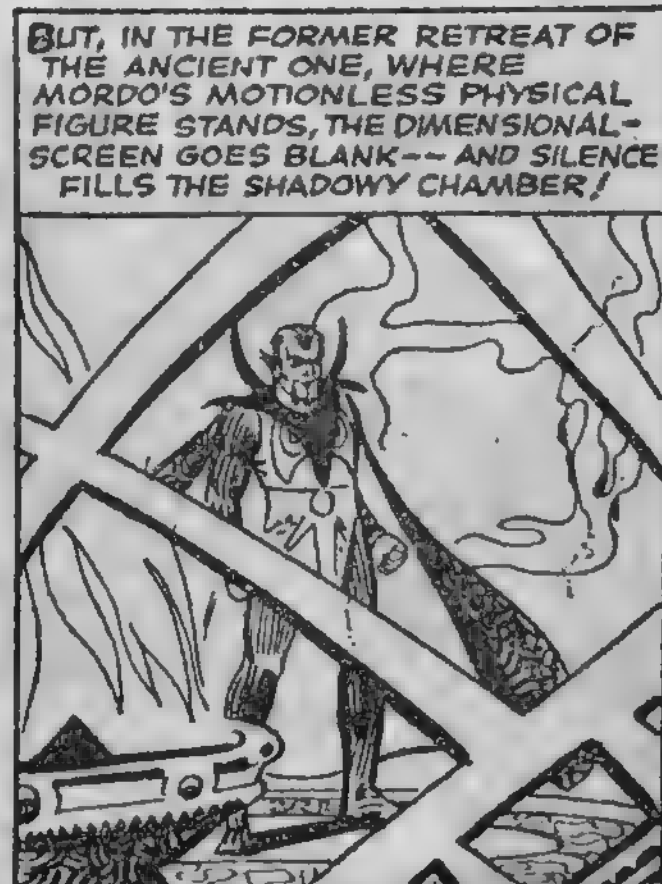
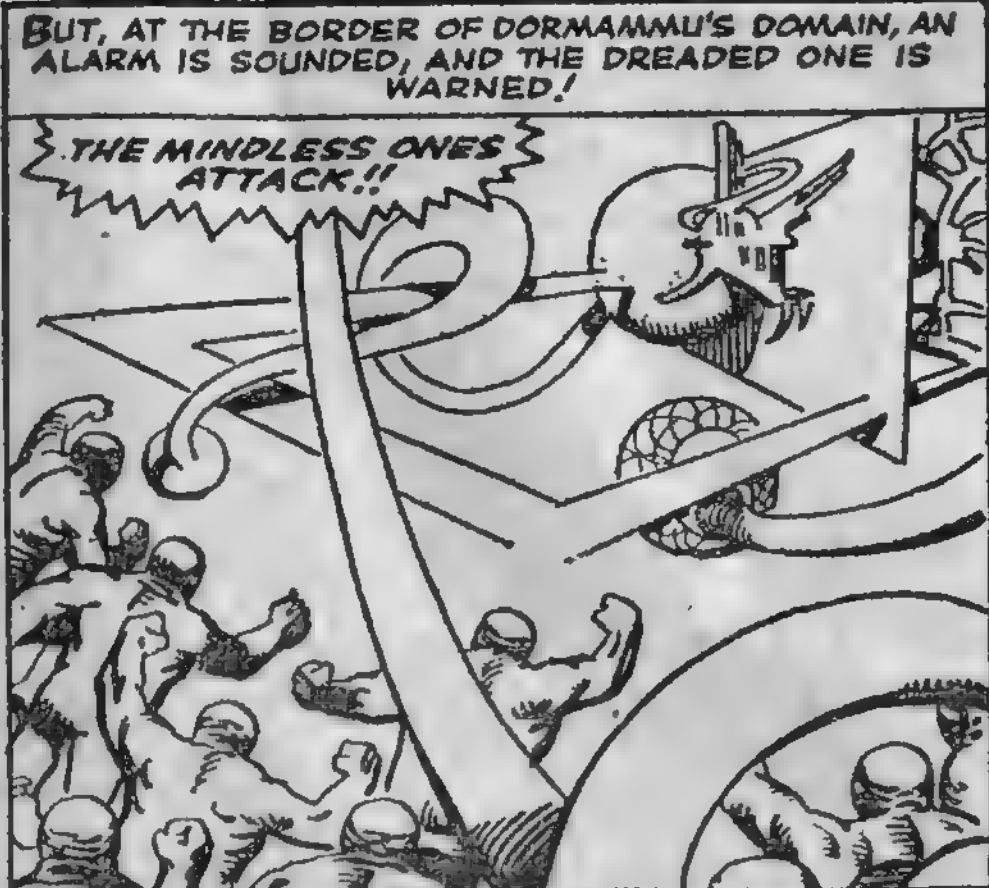
I SHALL LEAVE IT THERE, WHILE I FLEE! EACH SECOND IT WILL MAKE THE SHIELD WEAKER, AND WEAKER...



UNTIL, AT LAST, THE MINDLESS ONES BREAK THRU, TO RAVAGE THE DARK DIMENSION AT WILL!!







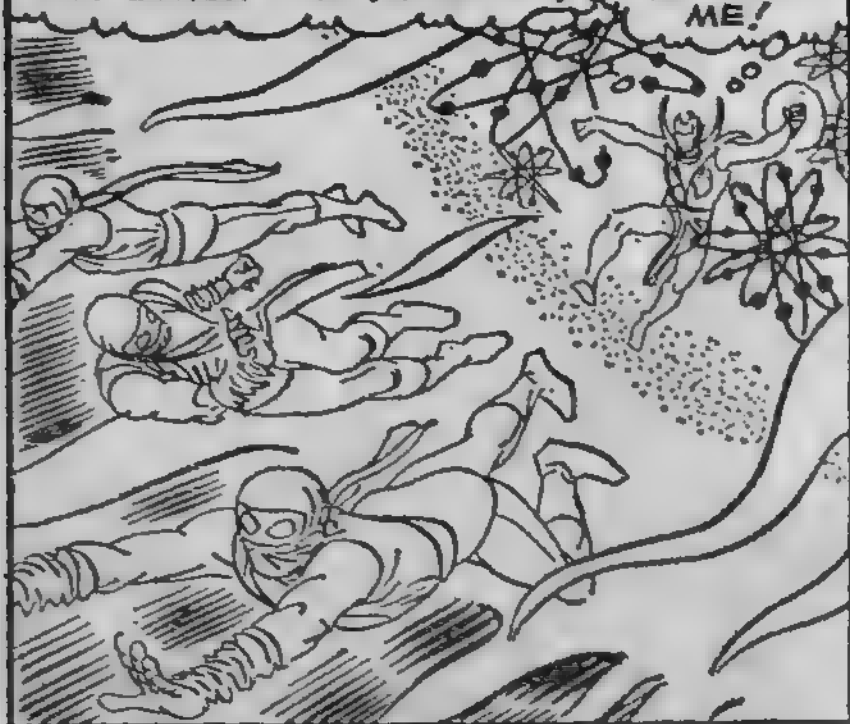






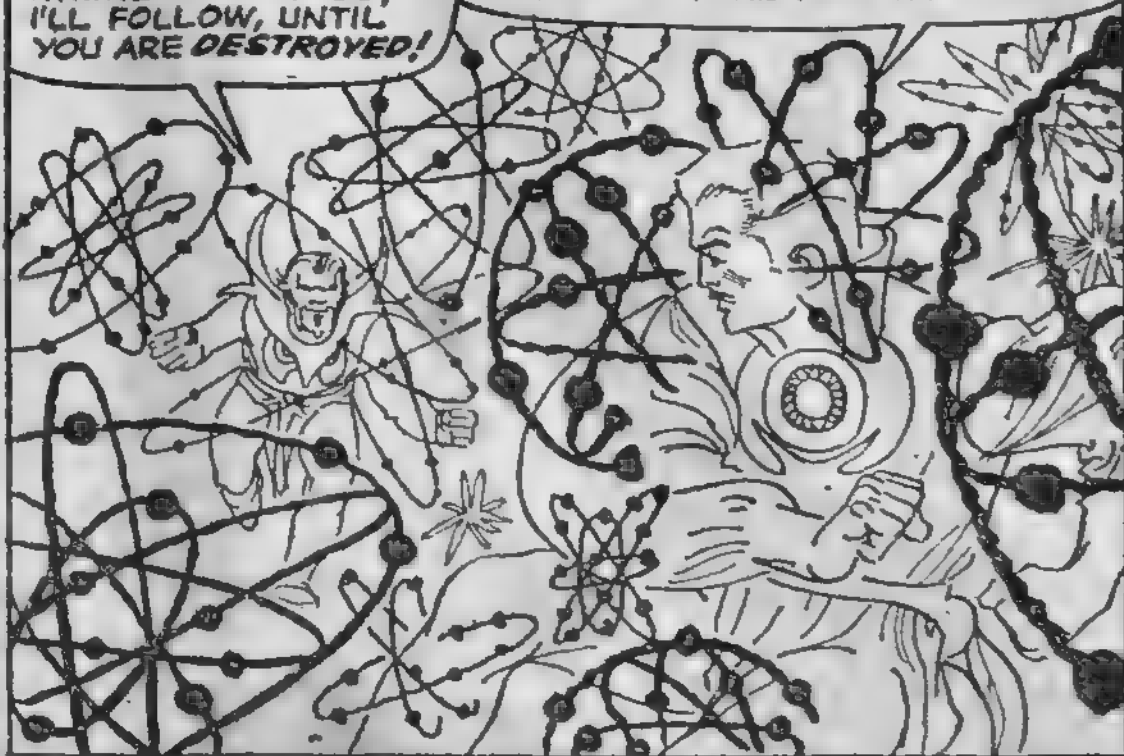
NOW THEY TURN--THEY'RE DESERTING ME COMPLETELY! BUT--THEY WOULD NOT DARE SUCH BEHAVIOR UNLESS THEY CAN SENSE I AM DOOMED!

BAN! WHAT AM I THINKING! NONE CAN DEFEAT ME!



YOUR SCHEME DID NOT WORK, STRANGE! YOU CANNOT LOSE ME! WHEREVER YOU GO, I'LL FOLLOW, UNTIL YOU ARE DESTROYED!

NO, MORDO--NOT JUST I--BOTH OF US! FOR I SHALL FLY DIRECTLY INTO THE CORE OF THE SUN--AND I'LL TAKE YOU WITH ME!



IT MEANS CERTAIN DEATH! UNLESS--WHAT IF IT IS A TRICK? WHAT IF HE KNOWS A SPELL TO PROTECT HIMSELF!



THAT MUST BE IT! HE PLANS TO LURE ME TO MY DEATH! BUT, I'M TOO SMART FOR HIM! HE CANNOT TRAP ME!

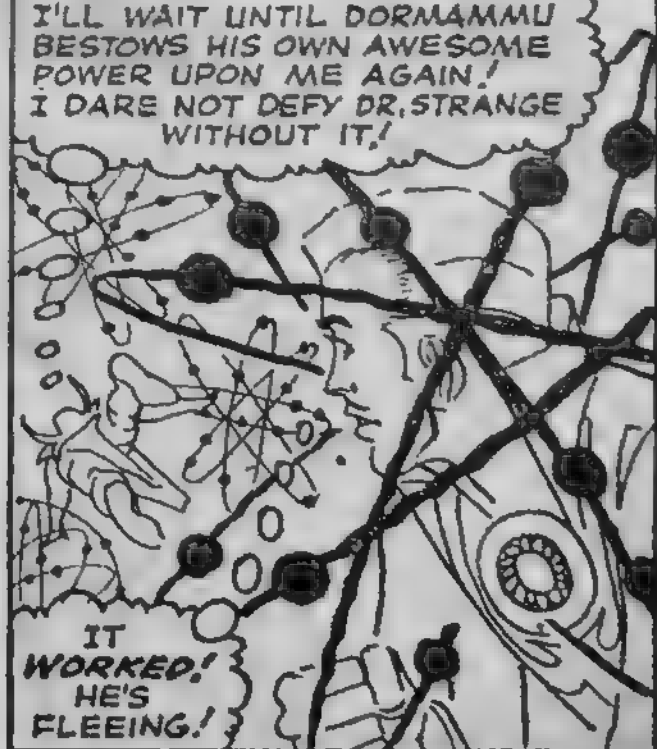
NO, STRANGE--I SHALL NOT FOLLOW YOU!



YOU CANNOT TRICK ME SO EASILY! I'LL WAIT FOR YOU ON EARTH, AND ATTACK YOU AGAIN AT MY LEISURE!

I'LL WAIT UNTIL DORMAMMU BESTOWS HIS OWN AWESOME POWER UPON ME AGAIN! I DARE NOT DEFY DR. STRANGE WITHOUT IT!

IT WORKED! HE'S FLEEING!



NOW, I, TOO, CAN RETURN TO EARTH! THE SHADES OF THE SERAPHIM HAVE BEEN MERCIFUL TO ME!



BUT, I SHALL RETURN BY A DIFFERENT ROUTE! WITH LUCK, IT WILL BE DAYS BEFORE MORDO FINDS ME AGAIN!



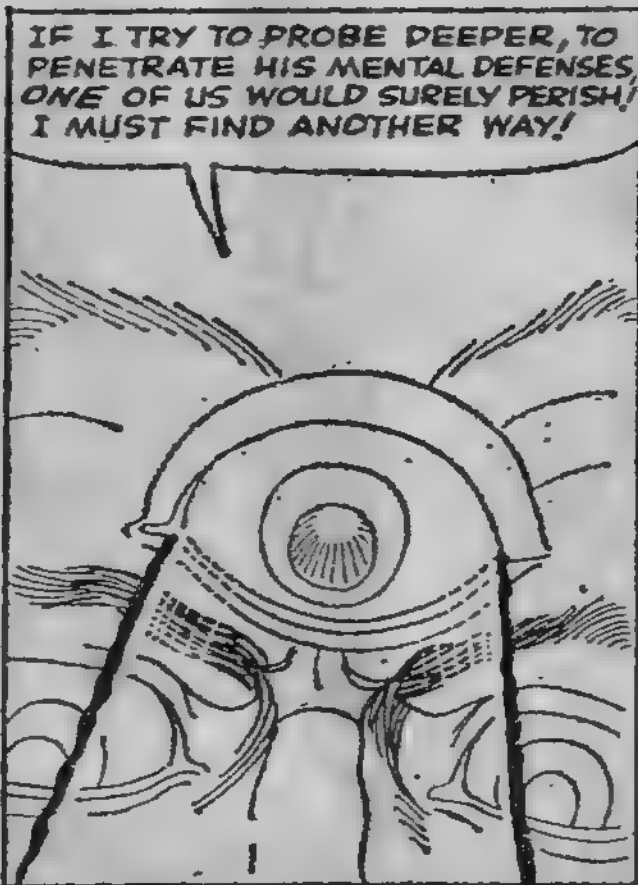
MINUTES LATER, IN TIBET...

HOW FARES THE MASTER, FAITHFUL ONE?

HE IS BETTER, DR. STRANGE! YOUR AMULET HAS STRENGTHENED HIM, THOUGH HE IS STILL IN A COMA!









MEANTIME, BACK IN THE ANCIENT ONE'S CAPTURED RETREAT AGAIN, MORDO PACES RESTLESSLY, WAITING--WAITING--

WHY IS THERE NO WORD FROM DORMAMMU?? WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM?

AHH! AT LAST AN IMAGE BEGINS TO FORM!

MORDO!  
IS IT OVER? IS STRANGE DESTROYED??

NO! THE SPIRITS DESERTED ME! AND STRANGE HAD THE SECRET OF SURVIVAL IN THE SUN'S CORE! I DARED NOT FOLLOW HIM!

COWARD! THERE IS NO SUCH SECRET! YOU FEARED TO FOLLOW!

I MUST GO NOW! MY OWN POWER HAS BEEN DRAINED-- I MUST RENEW IT! BUT, I SHALL RETURN TO YOU BEFORE LONG!

MEANWHILE, CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR DR. STRANGE! HOUND HIM-- WEARY HIM-- GIVE HIM NO REST! THAT IS ALL!

AS I SIT HERE, ABSORBING NEW POWER FROM WITHIN MY ENCHANTED TRIANGLE, I MUST THINK! HOW DID THE MINDLESS ONES ESCAPE?? HAS SOMEONE DARED TO BETRAY ME??

I HAVE RETURNED THE DEVICE WHICH WEAKENED THE BARRIER!

---YET, SO GREAT IS DORMAMMU'S POWER, THAT IF HE THINKS LONG ENOUGH, HE WILL SURELY DEDUCE THAT I AM THE GUILTY ONE!

AND, BACK IN A DARKENED ROOM, IN A SIDESTREET HOTEL IN NEW YORK, A MYSTIC TRANSFORMATION AGAIN TAKES PLACE...

I SHALL RETURN TO MY PHYSICAL FORM ONCE MORE! IT IS NOT SAFE TO LEAVE IT UNATTENDED FOR TOO LONG A TIME!

AND NOW, I MUST LOSE MYSELF IN THE NIGHT, AS I BEGIN--THE SEARCH FOR ETERNITY!

THE END



# KID MONTANA <sup>in</sup> OUTCAST

IT WASN'T THE MONTANA COWPOKE'S FAULT--TWO LOCAL HARDCASES PICKED A FIGHT, ONE AFTER THE OTHER! IT WAS THEN THE SHERIFF AND THE TOWN FATHERS TOLD HIM HE'D HAVE TO GO IF HE CAUSED TROUBLE ONE MORE TIME! KID MONTANA DID HIS BEST TO STAY PEACEABLE--BUT HE LEARNED THAT IT JUST COULDN'T BE DONE!



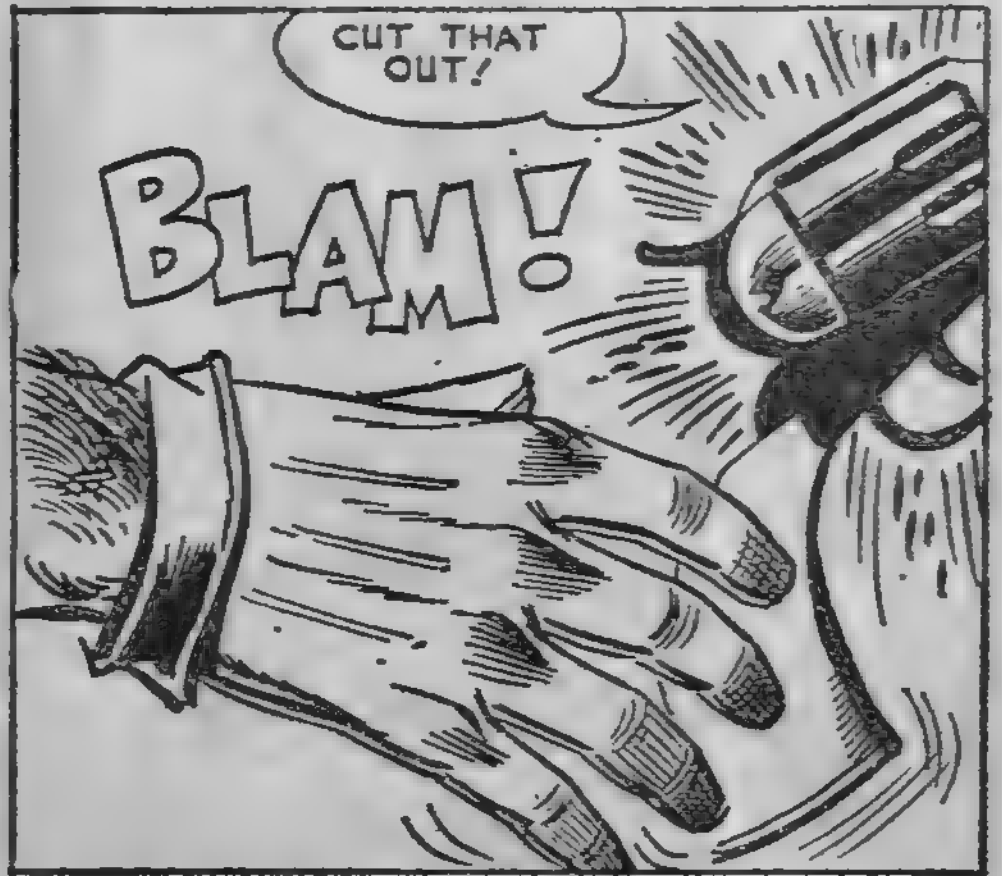




YOU'RE A TROUBLE-MAKER, KID MONTANA! I SPOTTED YOU THE DAY YOU RODE IN HERE WITHOUT A DOLLAR IN YOUR JEANS!

LOOK, SHERIFF, I TRIED TO KEEP CLEAR O' TROUBLE! IF MANTON AN' SWAZEY DIDN'T JUMP ME, THERE'D BE NONE NOW EITHER!

KID SWAZEY HAD BEEN SHAKEN UP... BUT HE CAME OUT OF IT FAST AND SAW KID MONTANA! FURTIVELY, HE REACHED FOR HIS COLT...



I WON'T STAND FOR GUNPLAY, DRIFTER! THAT SETTLES IT!

YOU ARRESTIN' ME FOR DEFENDIN' MYSELF, SHERIFF?



NO--BUT YOU'RE GETTIN' OUT OF THIS TOWN! DON'T COME BACK!

I HAD BUSINESS HERE--BUT I'LL GO! I CAN'T FIGHT EVERYBODY, I RECKON!



THE  
FOLKS  
IN THAT  
TOWN.  
DIDN'T  
KNOW KID  
MONTANA  
--THEY  
BELIEVED  
HE WAS A  
TROUBLE-  
MAKER OR  
WORSE!  
THEY  
WATCHED  
HIM RIDE  
OUT,  
HOSTILE,  
SILENT..



IF THEY KNEW WHY KIVI SWAZEY  
AND ROCK MANTON WERE HERE,  
THEY'D SURE NOT LOOK SO SMUG!  
ALL THE GENTS I TANGLED WITH  
ARE IN ON THE SCHEME!



THE  
FRIEND-  
LESS  
DRIFTER  
HAD NO  
REASON TO  
LOVE THAT  
TOWN--BUT  
HE'D SEEN  
FAMILIES  
THERE,  
WOMEN  
AND KIDS  
--HE  
CAMPED  
ABOUT  
FIVE  
MILES  
OUT THAT  
NIGHT  
AND  
PONDERED  
FOR A  
LONG  
TIME!

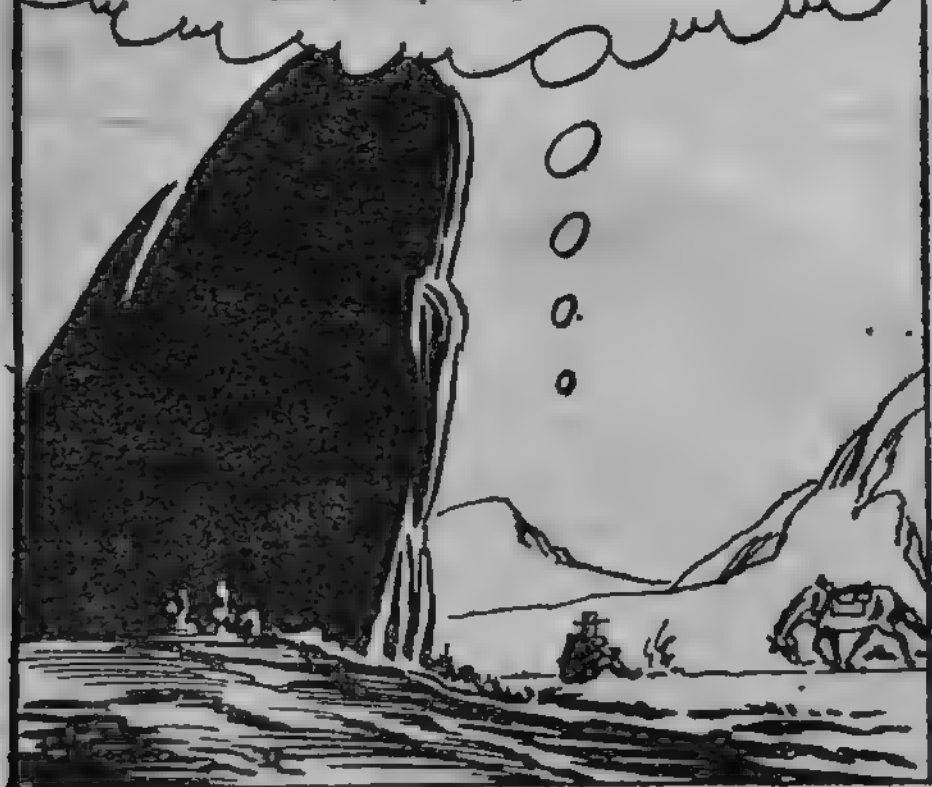
I GOT 'NOTHIN' BUT KICKS AND  
CUSSES BACK THERE--I OUGHTA  
RIDE AWAY AN' LET 'EM TAKE  
WHAT'S COMIN'!



I WOULD IF I HAD ANY SENSE!  
BUT I NEVER WAS THE SENSIBLE  
TYPE! I RECKON I'LL STAY  
NEARBY, KEEPIN' AN EYE OPEN...



I'LL BE AROUND WHEN MANTON,  
SWAZEY, AN' THE WILD BUNCH MAKE  
THEIR MOVE!



KID  
MONTANA  
RODE  
THE  
MOUNTAIN  
TRAILS  
AROUND  
THE  
TOWN,  
KEEPING  
WATCH,  
TRYING  
TO KEEP  
OUT OF  
SIGHT...  
NOT  
ALWAYS  
SUCCEED-  
ING!

IT'S THAT CUSSED  
DRIFTER! AFTER  
HIM, BOYS!





EVERYONE'S AFTER ME NOW! IF I HAD ANY SENSE AT ALL, I'D HEAD SOUTH AN' KEEP GOIN'!

CRACK!  
POW!



...BUT THEN I NEVER DID HAVE MUCH SENSE! I RECKON I'LL DISCOURAGE THAT BUNCH A LITTLE!

BAM!  
BLAM!



DAYS PASSED, THEN A WEEK... KID MONTANA HAD FOUND A PLACE WHERE HE COULD KEEP WATCH ON MANTON AND HIS CROWD WITHOUT BEING SEEN!

THE CASH'LL ARRIVE TO-MORROW MORNIN', ROCK!

GOOD, SHIV! SWAZEY, GET THE OTHER TWO-- WE'VE GOT TO PLAN THIS RIGHT! BRING 'EM HERE! SHIV AN' I WILL WAIT!



KID MONTANA WAS HERE--WE FIGURED HE WAS WISE AN' WE TRIED TUH RUN HIM OUT --THE LUCKY STIFF HAD US BEAT TILL THE SHERIFF HELPED US! HE RUN MONTANA OUT FOR US!



WE'LL BE HANGIN' AROUND THE EXPRESS OFFICE WHEN THE WAGON TOTIN' THE CASH ARRIVES! DON'T NONE OF YUH MOVE TILL I GIVE THE SIGNAL-- TWO SHOTS!



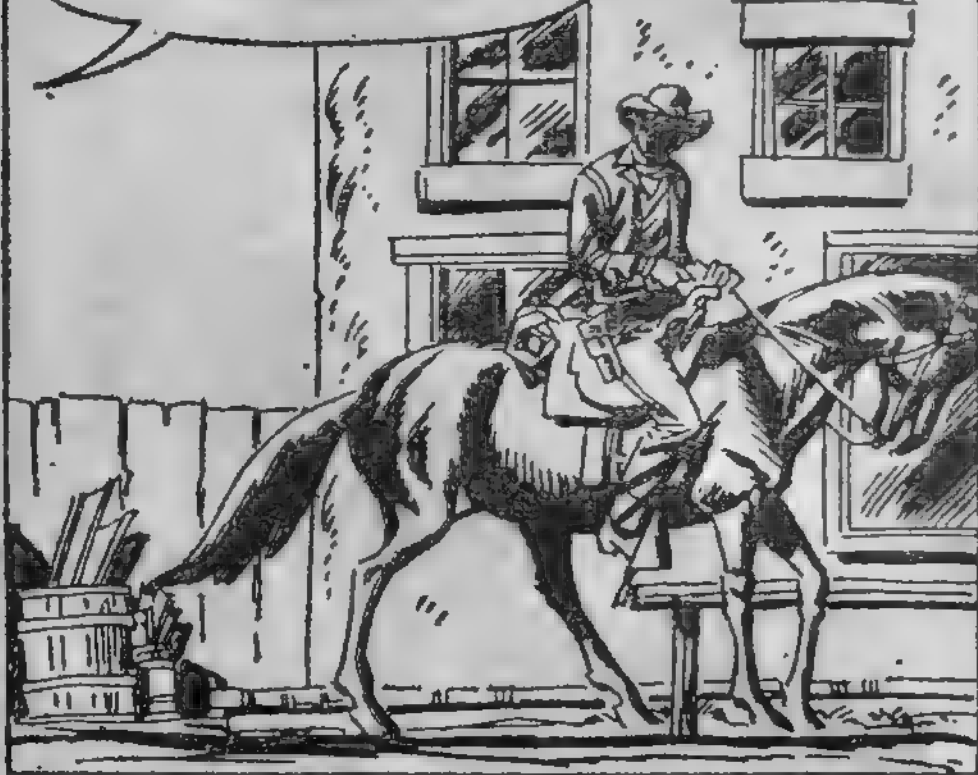


KID MONTANA WAS UP AT DAWN...

IT'S QUIET NOW--IN A FEW HOURS THIS STREET'S GONNA SOUND LIKE THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG!



HEY, LOOK! THERE'S THAT HARDCASE--KID MONTANA!



THAT'S WHAT I'LL DO, HOSS! I'LL GIVE THE CITIZENS A LOOK AT ME LATER--THE SHERIFF AND EVERY ABLE-BODIED MAN WILL BE AFTER ME!



AT NINE A.M., ONE HOUR BEFORE THE CASH WAS DUE TO ARRIVE, THE CITIZENS SAW SOMETHING THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE!

HEY, IT'S KID MONTANA! WHERE'S THE SHERIFF?

WE'LL GET HIM THIS TIME!



THEY'RE AFTER US, BOY! GET MOVIN'!



THE SHERIFF DEPUTIZED EVERY ABLE-BODIED MAN AROUND--THEY THUNDERED AFTER KID MONTANA MINUTES LATER!

THIS IS PERFECT! THE TOWN'S EMPTY EXCEPT FOR WOMEN AND KIDS--NOBODY'LL STOP US FROM STEALING THE CASH NOW!





HE  
GAINED  
ON THE  
POSSE  
AT  
FIRST  
...AND  
SLOWED  
DOWN  
TO  
MAKE  
SURE  
HE  
DIDN'T  
LOSE  
THEM!

THEY'RE STAYIN' CLOSE--  
MANTON AND HIS BUNCH MUST  
BE HAPPY! NOW, I'LL START  
TO SWING AROUND--I'VE GOT  
TO BE WHERE I CAN SEE THAT  
WAGON WHEN IT ENTERS TOWN!



THE CASH WAGON WAS COMING FAST AT  
THAT MOMENT...

EEEEEEYYYYAAAAHHHH!  
WE'RE NEAR TOWN--GIDDAP!



KID MONTANA TIMED IT PERFECTLY  
...HE CAME DOWN FROM THE HILLS,  
RACING PARALLEL TO THE WAGON!



MANTON'S BUNCH IS READY  
--I'LL HIT TOWN A FEW  
SECONDS LATE--GIVE  
THEM A CHANCE TO  
START THE ROBBERY!

GET READY--HERE'S  
OUR DOUGH!



GET OFF--WE'RE  
TAKING OVER  
NOW!

ROCK--KID  
MONTANA'S  
HERE!





KID MONTANA DIDN'T HESITATE...HE DROVE STRAIGHT FOR THE OUTLAW BOSS!



GET AWAY FROM 'IM, ROCK! WE'LL FIX THE DRIFTER!



MANTON'S MEN WERE EAGER TO GET AT KID MONTANA --THEY DIDN'T SEE THE POSSE THUNDER INTO TOWN!

GET MANTON AND HIS BUNCH! LAY OFF KID MONTANA!



LATER I WANT TO APOLOGIZE, SIR! I APOLOGIZE FOR MY FELLOW CITIZENS AS WELL!

I DON'T BLAME YOU, SHERIFF! YOU'RE PAID TO KEEP THE PEACE...

...I TRIED TO KEEP FROM FIGHT- IN'! BUT, WITH MANTON'S GANG OUT TO BEAT MY EARS OFF, IT WAS A LITTLE DIFFI- CULT!



END



HE WAS CHARGED WITH A SERIOUS DERELICTION OF DUTY... BUT WHEN HE TOLD HIS AMAZING STORY, WHO COULD SAY THAT THE GALLANT CAPTAIN HAD NOT FULFILLED HIS SWORN DUTY?

# IT'S ALIVE



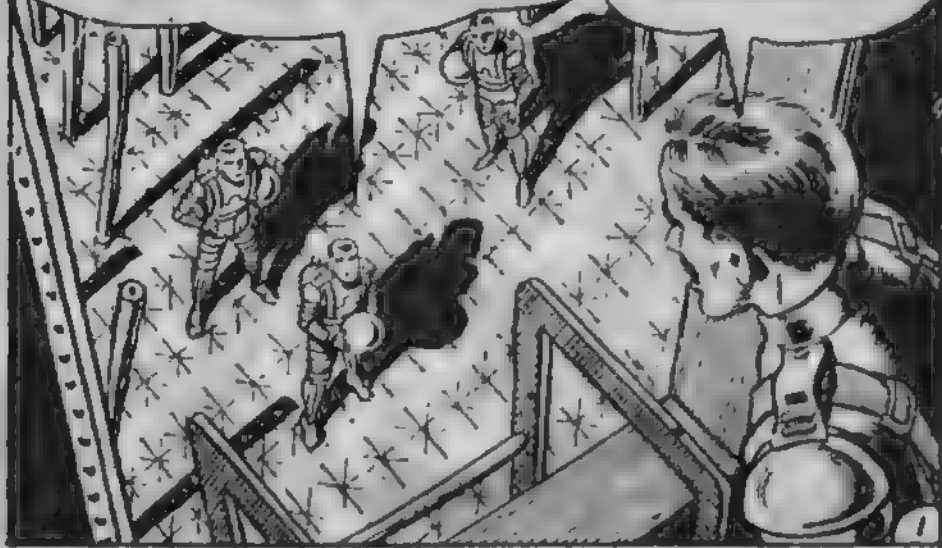
"IT WAS NEAR THE END OF OUR SECOND YEAR IN SPACE, WHEN WE SIGHTED THIS PLANET... SO FAR WE HAD EXPLORED OVER FIFTY PLANETS AND STARS WITHOUT FINDING LIFE... I GAVE THE ORDER TO LAND..."

EXECUTE LANDING PROCEDURE FOUR!  
ALL MEN TO LANDING STATIONS!  
ENVIRONMENT TEAM, STAND BY!

"THE LANDING WAS ROUTINE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT CREW BROUGHT BACK A FAVORABLE REPORT..."

THIS PLANET IS QUITE SIMILAR TO EARTH AS FAR AS THE ATMOSPHERE IS CONCERNED, CAPTAIN! IT'S SAFE TO EXPLORE, SIR... NO SAFETY GEAR NECESSARY!

GOOD! THEN LOOK FOR SIGNS OF LIFE IMMEDIATELY!





"WHEN THE EXPLORATION UNITS LEFT, I EXAMINED THE CURIOUS BAMBOO-LIKE GROWTH THAT COVERED MOST OF THE PLANET..."

IT FEELS STRANGE, CAPTAIN! IT'S TOUGH AND FLEXIBLE!

SOME FORM OF PLANT LIFE, NO DOUBT!



NOTICE THESE LINES! THEY'RE ALL OVER THE PLANET, LIKE SOME SORT OF NETWORK!

LOOK! WHEN I RUB MY HAND OVER THEM, THEY MOVE BACK TO FORM THE SAME PATTERN!



"THEN, SUDDENLY, WE HEARD THE FIRST ALARMING SOUND!"

WHAT WAS THAT?

I DON'T KNOW! THE ENTIRE PLANET IS SHAKING!



IT'S STOPPED! IT JUST THUMPED, AND THEN STOPPED!

I DON'T LIKE IT! SOMETHING OR SOMEBODY IS ON THIS PLANET, AND THEY MUST KNOW WE ARE HERE! I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS WATCHING ME!



"THE NEXT MORNING, THE EXPLORATION UNITS REPORTED BACK TO ME..."

NO SIGN OF LIFE, CAPTAIN! BUT WHILE WE WERE SLEEPING LAST NIGHT, SOMEONE TOOK OUR EQUIPMENT! THERE MUST BE LIFE ON THIS PLANET!



"BEFORE THE UNIT LEADERS COULD FINISH THEIR REPORTS, THAT SAME THUMP SHOOK THE PLANET AGAIN!"

THERE IT IS AGAIN! WE HEARD IT LAST NIGHT!

IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM INSIDE THE PLANET!



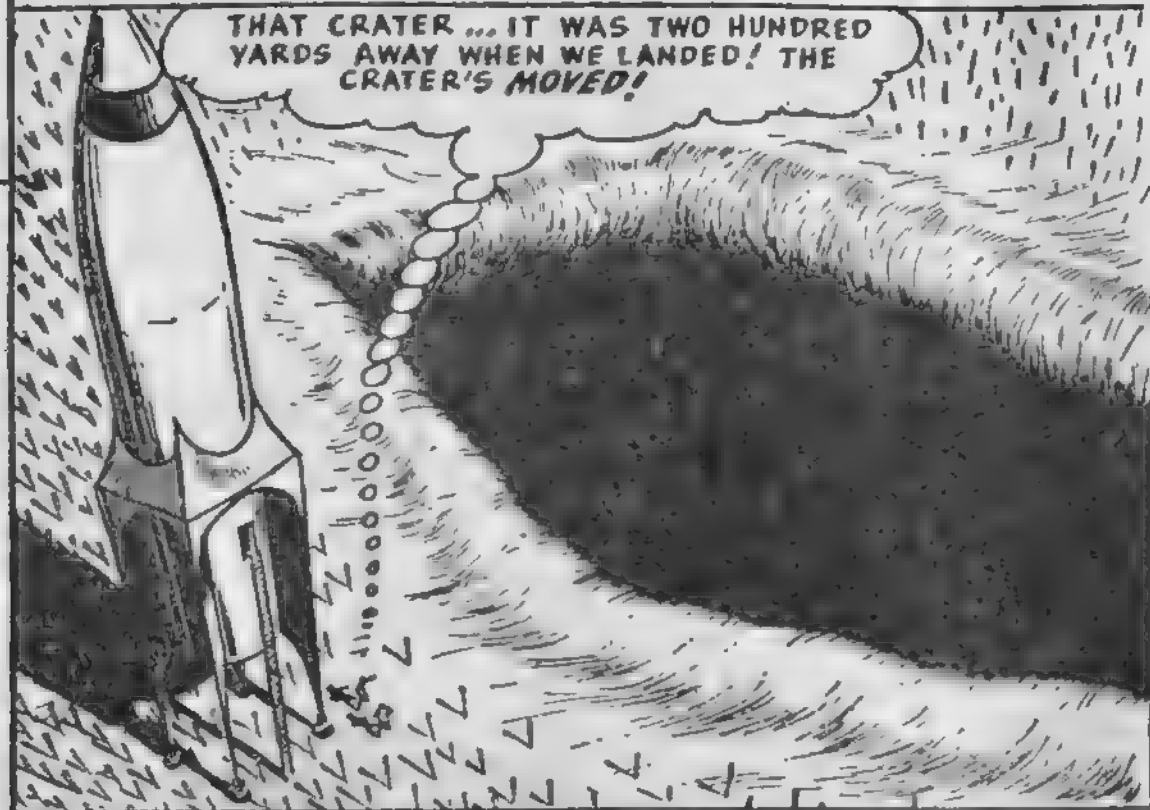
THERE *MUST* BE LIFE ON THIS PLANET! UNIT LEADERS, TAKE THE EXPLORATION TEAMS OUT AGAIN... AND THIS TIME, *FIND* LIFE!





"BUT AS THE UNITS MOVED OUT, I NOTICED SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT A LARGE CRATER NEAR OUR SHIP..."

THAT CRATER... IT WAS TWO HUNDRED YARDS AWAY WHEN WE LANDED! THE CRATER'S MOVED!



"I DIDN'T WASTE ANOTHER SECOND!"

ATTENTION! EVERYONE INTO THE SHIP! WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE! HURRY! BLAST OFF IMMEDIATELY!



"AFTER BLAST OFF, I DIDN'T LOOK BACK AT THE PLANET! I LOCKED MYSELF IN MY CABIN, AND REFUSED TO GIVE ANY EXPLANATION TO THE MEN!"

WHAT SHALL I TELL THE MEN, CAPTAIN? THEY WANT TO KNOW WHY WE LEFT BEFORE WE FINISHED EXPLORING!

TELL THEM **NOTHING!** WE'RE RETURNING TO EARTH!



I COULDN'T TELL THE MEN WHAT I KNEW! THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED ME!

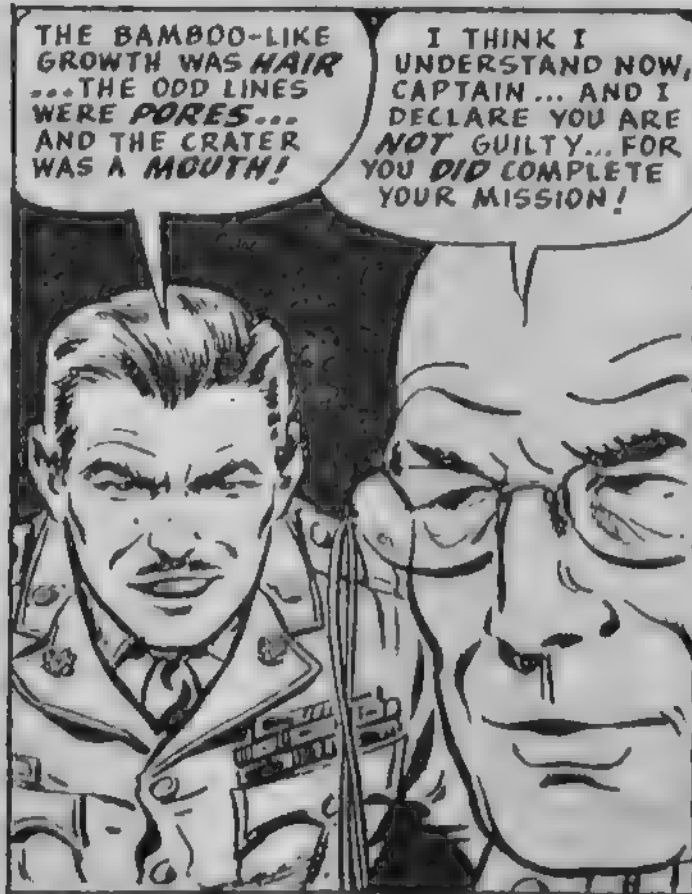
YOU ARE STILL GUILTY, CAPTAIN! YOU DID NOT **COMPLETE** YOUR ASSIGNED MISSION! YOU DID **NOT** FIND LIFE ON ANOTHER PLANET!



I **DID** COMPLETE MY MISSION, SIR! I NAMED THE PLANET "**VITA**"... FROM THE LATIN WORD FOR "**LIFE**"!

THE BAMBOO-LIKE GROWTH WAS **HAIR**... THE ODD LINES WERE **PORES**... AND THE CRATER WAS A **MOUTH**!

I THINK I UNDERSTAND NOW, CAPTAIN... AND I DECLARE YOU ARE **NOT** GUILTY... FOR YOU **DID** COMPLETE YOUR MISSION!



THE LOUD THUMP... THAT WAS THE **HEART BEATING**! THE **ENTIRE PLANET VITA IS ALIVE**!



THE END



# RIDE TO THE FUTURE

ALL the kids in town were buzzing about the Chronicle's cartoon contest for youngsters. First prize was the distinction of seeing the original winning cartoon appear in the paper. And aside from that honor, the Rocket-Jet Bicycle Company who sponsored the contest was offering their Bike-of-the-Future to the lucky winner.

Each afternoon, a long line of youngsters filed through the lobby of the Chronicle building just to gape wide-eyed at the Bike-of-the-Future. And it was a honey, a chrome-shiny, ultra-modern designed speed racer with gears that operated a buzzer that sounded like a jet in action. The frame of the bike was done in clear plastic tubing through which a fluorescent liquid bubbled. The liquid was illuminated with a battery device so that when the bike was on the road, it would gleam like a streak of colored light.

"Only poor Poker doesn't have enough imagination to write a contest entry," Harry Bennis said loudly. "Remember what happened in English class, kids, when it was Poker's turn to tell a story? He just stood up and said he couldn't make up anything out of his head that wasn't true. Boy, he has a great chance of winning with an imagination like that!"

Harry was somewhat of a hero to the fellows, and they obliged him by laughing as an audience to his ridiculing of

Poker.

Poker was used to the kids riding him, but now his feelings were hurt. The bicycle was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen, and he could picture nothing more desirable than owning it and being able to whiz along the streets on this spectacular creation. Actually, he had little time to enjoy the games the other fellows liked. He came from a large family where every bit of money was needed just to get by. Every afternoon he took odd jobs to help out at home, and he had a regular paper route to manage, too. Boy, that bike would really come in handy on his paper route, he thought dreamily. But he knew, too, that he didn't stand a chance. The kids may have been cruel to make fun of him, but truth to tell, he was never able to shine in an English class the way Harry did. His imagination was limited, and he was too practical and realistic to ever be able to concoct a comic strip idea which would win the fabulous bike.

He admitted that to himself, but it did pain him to have the fellows make fun of him, especially when the bike meant so much to him.

"I didn't come to the Chronicle building to enter that comic strip contest about winning the bike," he said defensively. "I'm here strictly on business. I have a paper route with the Chronicle, you know."

"That's right," said Harry, "all work and no play, Poker. You just don't care about having fun or using your imagination, do you? Well, fellows, I guess he's one less guy we have to worry about when it comes to this contest."

The kids laughed, and Poker hurried off. At the time, he payed little attention to the young boy who had come into the Chronicle building, where the bike was on display, and had overheard the entire conversation. To Poker and the other kids, this youngster was just another one of the intrigued contestants whose only interest was in winning the bike for himself.

But when Poker started out on his paper route on his rusty old bicycle, the young boy who had been listening stepped up to him.

"Hi, Poker. You too busy to have a few words with me?"

Poker didn't recognize the boy. But he had so little time to play with most of the kids in town, that he didn't think it too unusual. However, it was strange for Poker to find anyone who would speak to him pleasantly and take time out to even care about his friendship.

"I've got to deliver my papers," Poker said, "but I can spare a little time, I guess. What's on your mind?"

"Well, I was listening to those kids sound off, and I didn't like it. I didn't like it a bit."



"Oh, they didn't mean wrong by it," Poker apologized with a wistful understanding. "You see, I'm just a kid who doesn't have time to fit in with them and all that they do. I'm pretty much an outsider and I guess it's sort of natural for them to think I'm not as good as they are."

"Nonsense," the boy exclaimed. "They were being mean. Maybe they didn't realize how much they offended you, but I think they should be taught a lesson. You see, I'm a stranger around here, and I'd hate to think that when my people come here, I'd be treated badly just because I have to do things a little differently than the rest of them."

"Who are you?" Poker asked curiously. "What's your name?"

"Zealzodo," the boy replied without so much as batting an eyelash. "My dad is going to head the first Earth mission of the Outer Space people. Folks in Outer Space have sent me to scout out the territory on Earth, to see what they'll be up against when they land the first visiting ship here. It was a special secret, mind you, but after the things I've seen I feel you're the kind of kid who can pave the way for good relations between our world and yours."

"Whatever gave you that idea?" asked Poker.

"Well, you're a realist . . . a kid who sees things just as they exist, don't you? You're not one of those wild-eyed dreamers who exaggerate the impossible and falsify the truth. Suppose you enter this comic strip contest and tell the story of the Outer Space people and their desire to be friends with Earth. You're practical and truthful, and you'd give us a fair shake, I know. When

people read the stuff you put into that comic strip, they'd believe you, because your heart and your soul would be in it. Then, when Outer Space sends down its mission, people's minds would be open as to what to expect. You'd be able to describe the whole thing in advance for us. You'd be sincere. And that's what counts!"

"You mean you want me to put all this in a comic strip just to pave the way for good relations between Outer Space and Earth?" asked Poker.

Exactly!" Zealzodo exclaimed.



ed. "I'll give you a detailed description of the way people dress, of the spaceship landing they'll make here and the friendship we want to establish. You know the reason I was chosen to do this job . . . because of my youth and the necessity for convincing the Earth youth of our motives! Young people have open minds about this sort of thing."

Poker wrote down all the facts that Zealzodo gave him. He was sorry that the young boy from Outer Space could not stay to see the results of the contest.

"I have to transport myself back to Outer Space," Zealzodo explained. "We have at least another year of preparation before we present ourselves here. But at least, you will create the understanding we so sorely need before we come."

When Poker's comic strip on Outer Space and Zealzodo won the contest, everyone was amazed. There was a presentation ceremony where the Bike-of-the-Future was presented to Poker. Afterwards, the boys from town thronged around him, incredulous, but anxious to be his friend. Perhaps, all of them secretly hoped he would be granted a ride on the magnificent bike.

Generously, Poker gave each one chance. And when the Outer Space comic strip was printed in the Chronicle, the fellows digested it seriously and with admiration.

"Boy, do you have an imagination!" Harry enthused. "It's hard to believe that such a world and such people don't exist! I never would have thought you'd be able to make it all up."

Poker smiled. Perhaps the time was not too far away when they would realize that the magnificent, astounding world relations between Outer Space and Earth were a reality. And in his heart, he thanked Zealzodo for the acceptance he had won among his friends . . . an acceptance that Earth would now repay to the Outer Space people, when they landed.

THE END



# Desperate PERIL!

Balloons may be old fashioned as a means of transportation but they can still furnish plenty of thrills...as Betty Trinke found out to her sorrow. For days she drifted over the green sea of the jungle, only to descend at last, into more desperate peril! Only the kindness and great courage of Kolah, Queen of the Jungle, saved the girl in *THE RUNAWAY BALLOON..*



BETTY TRINKE PREPARES TO BREAK THE RECORDS FOR NON-STOP BALLOON FLIGHT.



YOU'RE OFF AT LAST, BETTY. GOOD LUCK. AND DON'T FORGET, WE GET MARRIED AFTER THIS. AND THEN NO MORE OF THIS STUFF!

I KNOW I'LL BREAK THE RECORD THIS TIME, JACK. THE WINDS ARE JUST RIGHT IN THIS PART OF AFRICA. THEN I'LL NEVER MAKE ANOTHER ASCENT.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME NOW, JACK, I'M GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT. YOU SHOULD BE PROUD OF ME, NOT JUST FRETTING ALL THE TIME!

IF ONLY I DIDN'T HAVE THIS HUNCH THAT SOMETHING'S GOING TO GO AMISS! BETTER NOT FRIGHTEN HER WITH IT, THOUGH.



'BYE! WISH ME LUCK! I FEEL AS IF THIS TRIP WILL MAKE HISTORY!

HURRY BACK TO ME, DARLING! GOOD LUCK! ALL THE LUCK IN THE WORLD!



WHILE FAR INLAND KOLAH PONDER'S A MESSAGE JUST RECEIVED FROM THE COMMISSIONER.

HE REQUESTS THAT I KEEP ALERTED FOR BETTY TRINKE AND HER BALLOON! FEARS SOMETHING MIGHT HAPPEN WHILE IN FLIGHT OVER THE JUNGLE! HMM...

HE KNOWS KOLAH WILL PROTECT ANYONE IN TROUBLE, EH, SABER?

TRUE, I WOULD BUT IT'S SO SILLY FOR ANYONE TO FLY OVER A JUNGLE IN A BALLOON! I'LL HAVE TO KEEP SOME KIND OF A VIGIL FOR HER, THAT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO!

LET'S GO, SABER! WE'LL HAVE TO FORM A WATCH AT THE PLACE OF MOUNTAINS! WE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO SCAN THE SKY DOWN HERE MIDST THE THICKET!



BUT SUDDENLY SABER STEPS IN A LONG FORGOTTEN TRAP.

SABER! OHHH...YOUR POOR PAW! STEADY, BOY! I'LL SEE IF I CAN RELEASE YOU! DON'T SNAP AT IT! YOUR FANGS CAN'T HELP!

BLAZES! I GET SO MAD. SOME OF THESE HUNTERS HAVEN'T GOT ANY MORE CONSCIENCE THAN A PYTHON! PLANT TRAPS IN MY JUNGLE, THEN GO FAR AWAY AND LEAVE THEM!

THERE! THESE HEALING LEAVES WILL FIX YOU UP AS GOOD AS NEW IN TIME! POOR FELLOW! THAT WAS A MEAN GASH BUT IT'LL BE ALL BETTER SOON!



BUT ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, A NEW DANGER THREATENS...

OOH...MORE TROUBLE! AND SABER WON'T BE ABLE TO HELP WITH THAT BAD FOOT. FACT IS...I'LL HAVE A HARD TIME SAVING HIM. POOR OLD FELLOW CAN'T EVEN GET OUT OF THE WAY.

DON'T MOVE, SABER, OR HE'LL GORE YOU! THIS IS ONE TIME YOU'LL HAVE TO PROVE YOUR CONFIDENCE IN ME AND I'LL HAVE TO PROVE BOTH MY SPEED AND FIGHTING POWER TO YOU!





YOU REALLY SHOULD PICK ON SOMEONE YOUR OWN SIZE, UGLY, BUT LIKE ALL COWARDS YOU WOULDN'T THINK OF ENDANGERING YOURSELF, WOULD YOU?

WE ARE A MATCH IN A WAY! WE'RE BOTH MAD AND I'LL STAKE MY KNIFE AGAINST YOUR HORNS! MAY THE BEST MAN WIN EVEN IF I AM ON MY OWN CHEERING SECTION!

YOUR THICK HIDE WON'T STOP THIS BLOW BUT IT'LL STOP YOU! DIE, YOU KILLER!

BUT HARDLY HAS THE BRUTE BEEN SLAIN, WHEN SABER LOOKS UP AND SNARLS...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, WHAT'S UP THERE THAT'S GOT YOU SO UPSET, SOMETHING IN THE TREES OR MAYBE IT'S THE BALLOON THE COMMISSIONER WAS TELLING ME ABOUT!

SURE ENOUGH! THERE SHE IS! SAY, THAT BALLOON IS TOO LOW! SHE MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE AFTER ALL! C'MON, SABER... CAN'T LET HER OUT OF SIGHT!

AND BETTY TRINKE IS INDEED IN VERY SERIOUS TROUBLE...

LOOKS LIKE I'VE FAILED AGAIN, AND WHAT A SPOT TO BE FORCED DOWN! THE WILDEST PART OF THE JUNGLE... NOTHING BUT SAVAGES AND WILD ANIMALS, I'LL NEVER GET OUT ALIVE.

AS SAVAGE EYES WATCH WITH AMAZEMENT THE PLUMMETING DESCENT OF THE STRANGE SKY THING...

AIEE! SOME STRANGE MONSTER DROPS AT US FROM THE SKIES!

IT IS A POWERFUL FLYING FOE! RALLY OUR MEN AND LET US ALL BE ARMED! IF WE DO NOT DESTROY THIS THING, WE MAY ALL BE DOOMED!

OHH! CAN'T CONTROL ANYTHING AND THOSE NATIVES ARE GOING TO MEAN SERIOUS TROUBLE WHEN THEY RECOVER FROM THEIR FRIGHT! THIS IS A FINE FIX! LOOK OUT BELOW!

HERE I GO! ALL OVER NOW, THANK GOODNESS I STILL HAD ENOUGH GAS IN THE BALLOON TO BREAK MY FALL! I WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED INSTANTLY, BUT MAYBE I WOULD HAVE BEEN LUCKY, THOSE SAVAGES WON'T STAY FRIGHTENED LONG... AND WHEN THEY COME BACK!

HELP! BEWARE MY BROTHERS! THE ATTACK IS ON!

IT IS UNLIKE ANY WAR WE HAVE EVER HEARD OF!



WHILE KOLAH MAKES ALL HASTE THROUGH THE JUNGLE TO WHERE SHE ESTIMATES THE BALLOON HAS FALLEN...

EVERYTHING HAPPENS AT ONCE! CARRYING SABER SLOWS ME DOWN AND THAT GIRL LANDED SO HARD SHE COULD BE BADLY HURT, TOO... IF NOT KILLED!



DON'T WORRY, SABER, I WON'T DESERT YOU! THAT PAW WILL BE ALL RIGHT SOON, BUT YOU CAN'T WALK ON IT JUST YET! RELAX NOW AND JUST TRUST IN KOLAH! THAT'S THE BOY...



WHILE AHEAD SOME MILES...

OHH... THEY'LL KILL ME... MY HAND IS SHAKING SO THIS GUN IS WORTHLESS! WHAT CHANCE DOES IT GIVE ME ANYWAY AGAINST SO MANY?

IT IS TRUE! SHE CAME IN THE STRANGE BIRD TO KILL US! LOOK! SHE SLAYS OUR BROTHER!

WAAA...

KEEP AWAY FROM ME! I'LL EMPTY MY GUN ON ALL OF YOU! KEEP AWAY, I SAY!

AND WHEN HER PISTOL MISSES FIRE ON THE NEXT SHOT...

MY GUN! WHAT'S WRONG? IT'S MISSING SHOTS! OHHH...



WE HAVE YOU NOW, DEVIL WOMAN, AND YOUR POWER IS GONE! YOU SHALL PAY DEARLY FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE!

LET ME BE! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND I WAS ONLY TRYING TO PROTECT MYSELF! YOU STARTED IT ALL! YOU COULDN'T PUNISH ME FOR THAT... HELP...

AND KOLAH WATCHES FROM NOT FAR OFF...

HMM... THE MATTOWI TRIBE! AND FAR OUT OF THEIR OWN TERRITORY. A WAR PARTY, THAT LEADER OF THEIR IS A CONSTANT SOURCE OF TROUBLE! LOOKS LIKE I'M JUST IN TIME...

STAY PUT, SABER! THE REST WILL HELP THAT PAW OF YOURS AND MAYBE I CAN DO SOMETHING TO MOVE THAT GIRL OUT OF THE DANGER ZONE SHE DROPPED RIGHT INTO!





KOLAH FOLLOWS THE PARTY AS THEY TAKE THEIR CAPTIVE TO THEIR OWN KRAAL...

THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY! THAT GIRL HAS MORE GUARDS THAN FORT KNOX...AND I CAN'T FORGET POOR SABER, EITHER! I SHOULD BE GETTING BACK TO HIM!

THEY...THEY INTEND TO BURN ME AT A STAKE! OH, NO...THIS IS A NIGHTMARE! IT CAN'T COME TRUE...IT CAN'T...

PATIENCE...SOON THE SMALL SPARKS WILL KINDLE A FIRE AND OUR ENEMY WILL BE REMOVED FROM OUR PRESENCE!

PUT MORE BRUSH ON SO THAT THE FIRE WILL CLIMB TO THE SKIES AS SHE HAILED FROM!

OH-OH! THE FIRST THING TO DO IS SCATTER THAT FIRE! IT SOUNDS EASY, BUT I COULD FAIL! FOR THE SAKE OF THE GIRL I CAN'T AFFORD TO EVEN THINK OF SUCH A THING...

PLEASE! MERCY!

AIEE! IT IS THE JUNGLE GODDESS!

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET, PLAYING WITH FIRE, BOYS! SOMEONE ALWAYS GETS BURNED WHEN THAT HAPPENS!

OH! MUST BE KOLAH, I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT! HELP! I CAN'T STAND THE SMOKE MUCH LONGER!

OH THANK YOU...IF YOU'LL UNTIE ME I'LL TRY TO HELP YOU...THEY'LL KILL YOU, TOO! YOU'LL NEVER ESCAPE SO MANY!

CAN'T TAKE TIME NOW TO UNBIND A HYSTERICAL WOMAN! JUST WISH ME LUCK!

THIS JOB IS JUST STARTED! YOU CAN WIN A BATTLE AND STILL LOSE A WAR! I'VE GOT TO SCATTER THESE KILLERS!

FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE THEY SAY AND I'LL TAKE THAT ADVISE! YOU'D BETTER RUN FOR IT, PAL IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TASTE YOUR OWN MEDICINE! I MEAN BUSINESS WITH THIS BRAND!





IF I CAN PUT A GOOD SCARE INTO THIS ONE THE OTHERS WILL FALL IN LINE WITHOUT ANY SERIOUS TROUBLE!

IF I CAN ONLY CONQUER THIS JUNGLE WITCH I WILL BE HIGHLY HONORED IN MY TRIBE! I MIGHT EVEN GET TO BECOME THE NEW CHIEF FOR SURELY SHE WILL KILL HIM!

BUT... OTHERS CAN FIGHT AS YOU DO, KOLAH!

WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? OHH.. PARRY WITH ME, WILL YOU? A FIERY DUEL...

OHH...THE FLAMES! BUT I'VE LOST! HE'S KNOCKED THE TORCH RIGHT FROM MY GRASP! WHO COULD FIGHT ON WITH THAT BLAZE GETTING AT THEM...



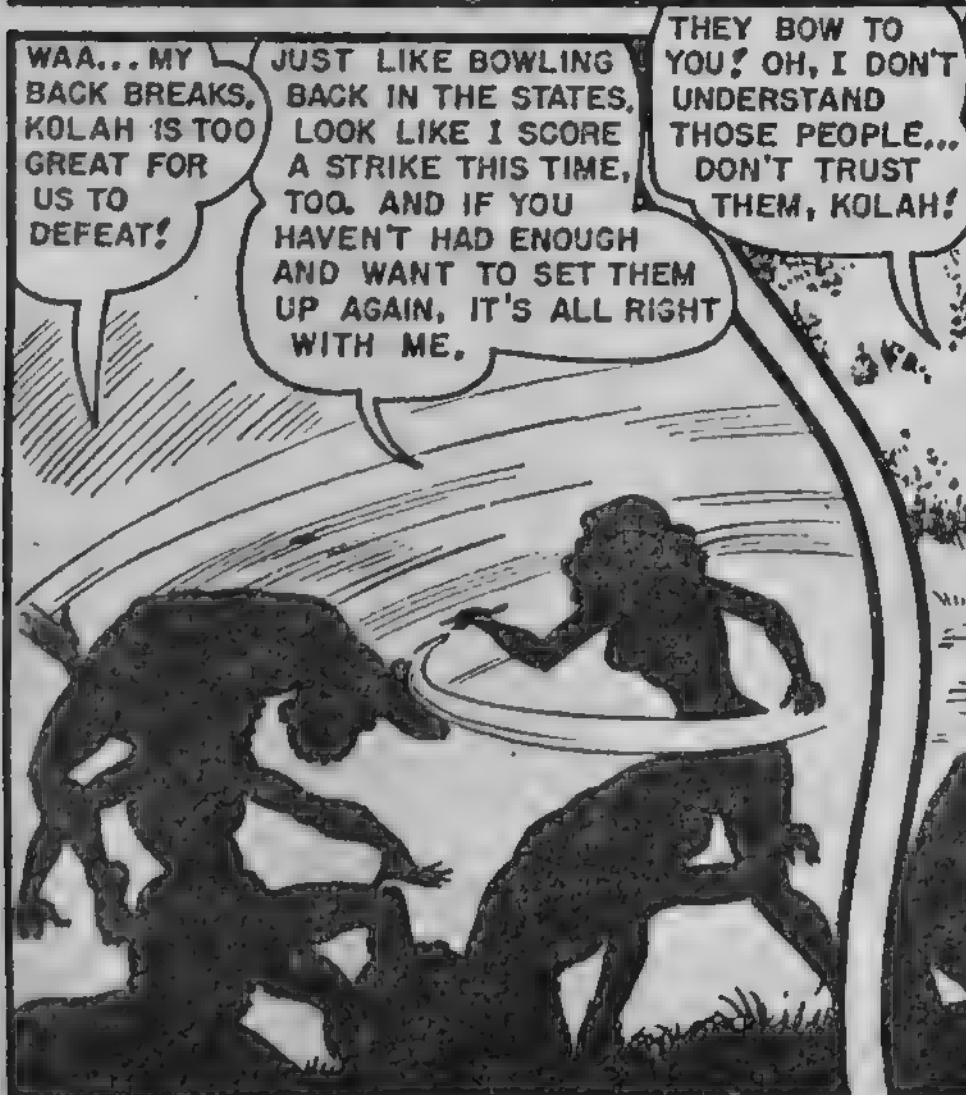
AH! NOW THE PLEASURE OF SLAYING YOU BELONGS TO ME! YOU HAVE DONE LITTLE BUT DELAY OUR PLANS, KOLAH, AND THIS MOMENT EVEN MAKES THAT WORTH WHILE!

PRETTY SURE OF YOURSELF, AREN'T YOU? MAYBE I CAN'T DO SO WELL WITH FIRE BUT THIS IS A DIFFERENT STORY!

THIS LOOKS AS IF I'M A STRONG ARM, DOESN'T IT? WELL, I'M NOT EXACTLY WEAK BUT THE CREDIT REALLY GOES TO A FEW TRICKS I PICKED UP CALLED JU-JITSU! HOW'S THIS FOR PERPETUAL MOTION? GIVE UP?

AIEE! NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH A WOMAN!

WAH! SAVE ME..



WAA...MY BACK BREAKS, KOLAH IS TOO GREAT FOR US TO DEFEAT!

JUST LIKE BOWLING BACK IN THE STATES, LOOK LIKE I SCORE A STRIKE THIS TIME, TOO. AND IF YOU HAVEN'T HAD ENOUGH AND WANT TO SET THEM UP AGAIN, IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH ME.

THEY BOW TO YOU? OH, I DON'T UNDERSTAND THOSE PEOPLE... DON'T TRUST THEM, KOLAH!

THEY CAN BE TRUSTED NOW ALL RIGHT! THIS IS THEIR WAY OF SHOWING THAT THEY REALIZE THEIR LEADER WAS A TOTAL LOSS! AND IF THEY PROMISE TO GIVE UP THESE PRIVATE WARS, I'LL FORGIVE THEM!

AND LATER...

GEE, KOLAH, YOU WERE SWELL! SAVED MY LIFE, AND I'M CURED, TOO. NO MORE TRYING TO BREAK RECORDS FOR ME. I'M GOING TO GET MARRIED.

GOOD LUCK TO YOU! YOU'VE GOT PLENTY OF PLUCK! NOW WE'D BETTER GO AND SEE ABOUT SABER!

THE END



# Jingles

in

## CARNIVAL OF FEAR

AND Wild Bill Hickok







COW-PUNCHERS AND RANCH OWNERS CAME FROM ALL OVER TO SEE THE CARNIVAL! MARSHAL HICKOK AND JINGLES FOUND EVERYTHING AS THE COLONEL HAD PROMISED...

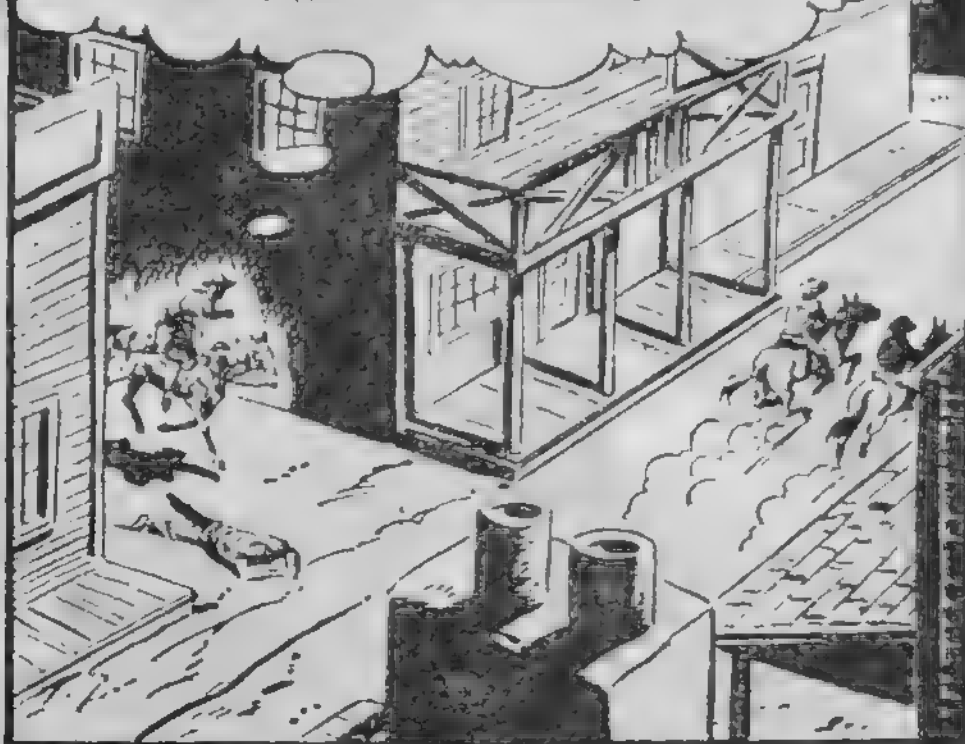


MARSHAL HICKOK WENT BACK TO TOWN!  
HE WAS IN HIS OFFICE WHEN HE HEARD  
A SHOT...

I SHOULD HAVE  
KILLED YOU  
BEFORE!



I HOPE THE EXPRESS COMPANY'S  
WATCHMAN ISN'T BADLY HURT!  
RIGHT NOW MY JOB IS TO GET  
THOSE TWO HOMBRES!



PRETTY FAIR SHOOTING FROM THE BACK OF  
A HORSE -- AND I'LL LOSE THEM ONCE THEY  
MIX IN WITH THE CARNIVAL CROWD!



THE CARNIVAL WAS IN FULL  
SWING, FILLED WITH EAGER  
CUSTOMERS LINING UP FOR  
TICKETS...

NOW,  
REMEM-  
BER,  
BABY!

YOU CUT THAT  
LAST SHOW  
SHORT, DIDN'T  
YOU, DIABLO?  
TAKE A TRIP  
TO TOWN?



I'VE BEEN HERE  
ALL NIGHT, HAVEN'T  
I, DIANE?  
TELL HIM!

Y-YES,  
HE WAS  
HERE ALL  
NIGHT --  
TALKING  
TO ME...



THAT'S ALL  
I WANTED  
TO KNOW!  
THANKS,  
FRIEND!  
WHAT'S  
THE  
TROUBLE?

M-MY ARM!  
LET GO,  
HICKOK!  
I HAVE A  
SHOW IN A  
FEW  
MINUTES!





BACK AT THE EXPRESS OFFICE A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE MARSHAL FOUND THE GROGGY WATCHMAN AND AN INDIGNANT OFFICE MANAGER...

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN WHILE MY PLACE WAS ROBBED?



RELAX, LEO! I HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA WHO DID IT! FIND ANYTHING, JINGLES?

YEAH, BILL! I FOUND THIS SILVER DOLLAR WITH HOLES PUNCHED IN IT NEAR WHERE THE WATCHMAN WAS LAYIN'!



DOGGONE IT, BILL, YUH DONE IT AGAIN! LEFT ME IN TOW WHILE YUH WENT SKYHOOTIN' OFF AFTER THE OUT-LAWS!

YOU DID A LOT MORE GOOD HERE, JINGLES! LET'S TURN IN!



THE NEXT DAY WAS QUIET--FOR EVERYONE BUT THE TELEGRAPH OPERATOR! WILD BILL KEPT HIM BUSY...

I JUST CAME FROM THE CARNIVAL--DIABLO AND THE HELPER WHO TAKES CARE OF THE PROPS WERE GABBIN' ALL DAY! WHAT'D YOU GET, BILL?

JUST WHAT I EXPECTED! LET'S GET BACK TO THE CARNIVAL!



LATER THAT NIGHT, WHEN EVERYONE WAS AT THE CARNIVAL...

HURRY UP--WE HAVE TO GET BACK FOR THE NEXT SHOW!

GET ON THE HORSE, BABY! AS LONG AS YOU'RE WITH US, WE'RE SAFE!



THERE'S GONNA BE ANOTHER HOLD-UP? HOW DO YOU KNOW, BILL?

A SILVER DOLLAR TOLD ME! GET THAT HORSE MOVIN', JINGLES!







WHAT  
WAS  
THE

# STRANGE POWER OF SIMON DRUDD!!



WAS IT ONLY ONE SHORT WEEK AGO WHEN I SET OFF THE ALARM?--THE ALARM THAT BROUGHT THE POLICE RUSHING TO OUR LABORATORY...

THE DOOR'S LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE! WHOEVER TRIGGERED THE ALARM MUST STILL BE IN THE LAB!

WE'LL HAVE TO BREAK IN! O'KEEFE, COVER US!

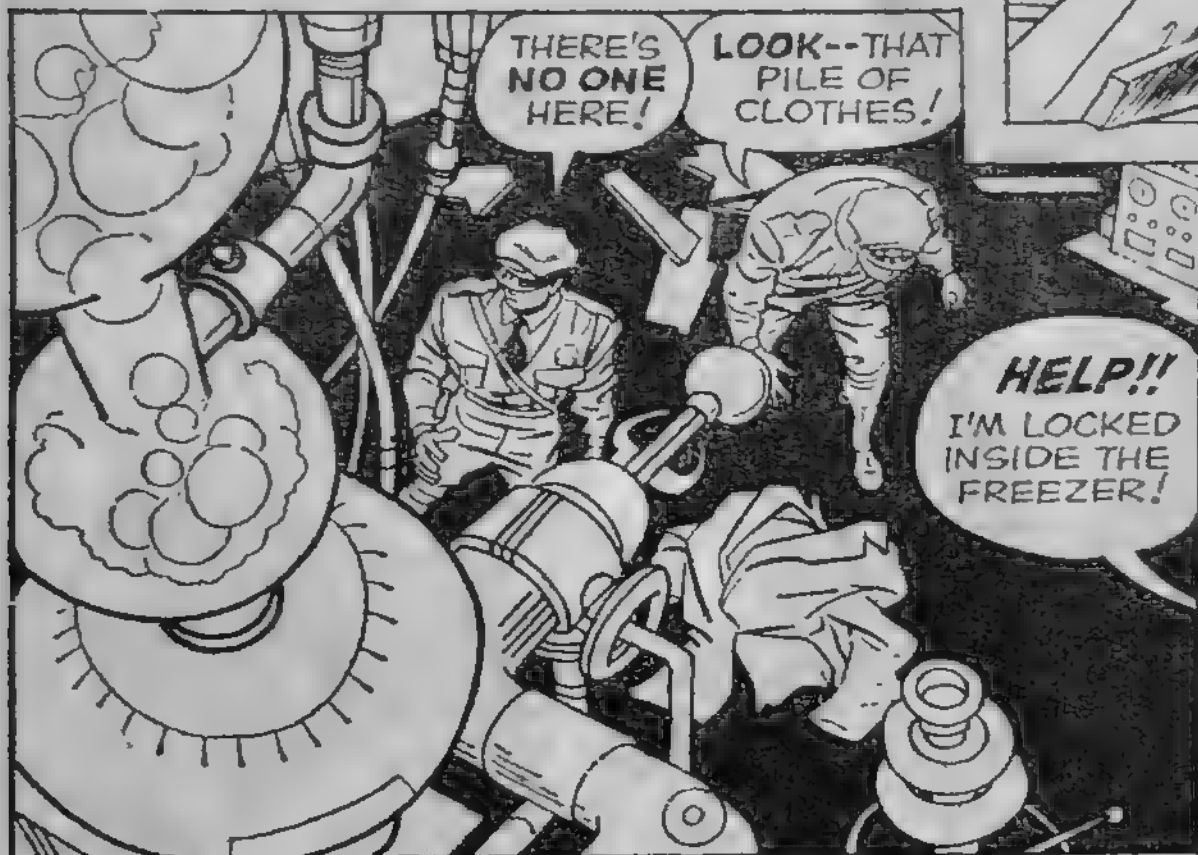


I HEARD SEVERAL HEAVY THRUSTS, AND THEN...



THERE'S NO ONE HERE!

LOOK--THAT PILE OF CLOTHES!



HELP!! I'M LOCKED INSIDE THE FREEZER!

HURRY!!-- GET ME OUT!! HELP!!

STAND BACK! I'M GONNA BLAST THE LOCK OFF!



THE LOCK SHATTERED, AND AT LAST-- I WAS FREE!

THANK HEAVENS YOU CAME WHEN YOU DID... ANOTHER FEW MINUTES AND I WOULD HAVE FROZEN TO DEATH!

WHAT HAPPENED? HOW DID YOU GET LOCKED IN THERE?



LET ME THAW OUT A LITTLE... THEN I'LL TELL IT TO YOU... THE WHOLE FRIGHTFUL STORY...!





**FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...**

MY NAME IS BENTLEY... I'M A SCIENTIST! FOR MANY MONTHS I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH OLD SIMON DRUDD, THE CHEMIST! WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO MAKE A **YOUTH SERUM!**

A **YOUTH SERUM?**

**TIME AND AGAIN WE FAILED! BUT ALWAYS WE KEPT TRYING--WE WOULDN'T GIVE UP! IN SPITE OF GROWING RIDICULE FROM BOTH OUR COLLEAGUES AND THE PUBLIC, WE STRUGGLED ONWARD...**

LOOK, CHARLIE--- THE **MAD SCIENTISTS** ARE CALLING IT A DAY!

**HAW HAW**

WONDER HOW LONG THOSE TWO NUTS ARE GONNA TRY TO FIND A WAY TO BECOME YOUNG?!

**HAH HAH HO**

THEY'LL PROBABLY KEEP TRYING TILL THEY BOTH DIE OF OLD AGE!

**WE TRIED EVERYTHING... FROM LEGENDARY FORMULAS OF THE ANCIENTS TO THE MOST MODERN MEDICAL FINDINGS...**

I'VE FINALLY DECIPHERED THIS MANUSCRIPT! I'LL BE READY TO START MIXING THE COMPOUNDS SOON!

**GOOD! IN THE MEANTIME I'LL FINISH UP WITH THIS ENZYME EXTRACT!**

**BUT FINALLY, ONE DAY, OUR LABOR PAID OFF!!**

THIS IS IT! WE'VE GOT IT-- AT LAST!

**THE YOUTH SERUM!!**

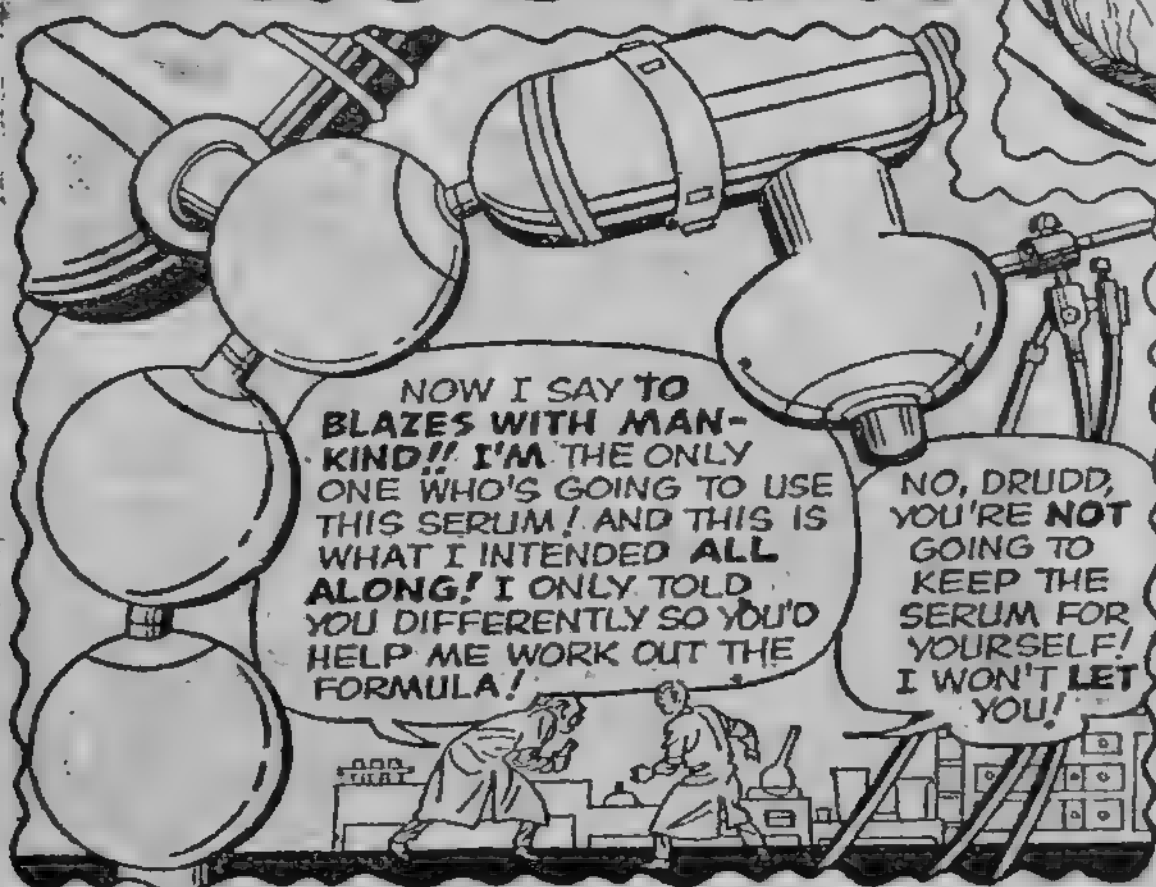
ONE DRINK OF THIS SERUM WILL MAKE AN OLD MAN YOUNG! IT'S THE GREATEST DISCOVERY OF ALL TIME!!

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE WE'VE FINALLY SUCCEEDED! IT'S ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! WAIT TILL WE TELL THE WORLD--WE'LL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE GREATEST SCIENTISTS ON EARTH!

BUT THEN, TO MY ASTONISHMENT, SIMON DRUDD GLARED AND CRIED...

**NO!** THIS SERUM IS NOT FOR THE WORLD! IT'S FOR ME!... AND ME ALONE!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND... ALL THIS TIME WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE FORMULA, YOU'VE SAID WHAT A BOON IT WOULD BE FOR MANKIND! AND NOW--



NOW I SAY TO BLAZES WITH MANKIND!! I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GOING TO USE THIS SERUM! AND THIS IS WHAT I INTENDED ALL ALONG! I ONLY TOLD YOU DIFFERENTLY SO YOU'D HELP ME WORK OUT THE FORMULA!

NO, DRUDD, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO KEEP THE SERUM FOR YOURSELF! I WON'T LET YOU!

YOU FOOL! YOU HAVE NO CHOICE! GET INTO THE FREEZER!

NO, SIMON--YOU WOULDN'T! YOU WOULDN'T KILL ME!!!



AT GUNPOINT I WAS FORCED INTO THE FREEZER...

I HOPE YOU CAN HEAR ME, BENTLEY... FOR THIS IS THE LAST THING YOU WILL EVER HEAR! I'M GOING TO DRINK THE SERUM NOW! I'M GOING TO BECOME YOUNG AGAIN!

IF I TAKE THAT SERUM EVERY TWENTY YEARS, I'LL BE ABLE TO LIVE FOREVER! I'LL BE ABLE TO ACCUMULATE MORE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE THAN ANY OTHER MORTAL! IN A FEW CENTURIES I'LL BE THE MOST BRILLIANT MAN ON EARTH! AND ONE DAY... ONE DAY MEN WILL PROCLAIM ME RULER OF EARTH!

I'M GOING TO BECOME IMMORTAL!! AND NO ONE--NOTHING--CAN STOP ME!! HA! HA! HA!

I HAVE TO GET FREE--SOMEHOW--BEFORE I FREEZE TO DEATH! SIMON DRUDD IS MAD! HE MUST BE STOPPED! WAIT--THE BURGLAR ALARM! THAT'S IT!





I GRABBED A PIECE OF LOOSE PIPE AND FRANTICALLY STARTED TO DIG INTO THE WALL...

IF I CAN JUST GET TO THE ALARM SWITCH IN TIME-- IN TIME TO BRING THE POLICE!!



I'VE JUST DRUNK THE SERUM! I CAN FEEL IT STARTING TO WORK ALREADY, BENTLEY! IT'S WORKING-- I'M BEGINNING TO GET YOUNGER!! HA! HA! HA!



YOUNGER!

YOUNGER!

HA HA HA!

YOUNGER!!

STILL YOUNGER--



WHILE I FEVERISHLY TRIED TO REACH THE ALARM WIRE, I HEARD DRUDD'S VOICE GETTING STRONGER--LOUDER--AND THEN HIS LAUGH TURNED INTO A CHILD'S HAPPY GIGGLE!!



SOON I HEARD THE GURLING OF A BABY... WHICH GREW INTO THE WAILING OF AN INFANT...



...AND FINALLY--THERE WAS ONLY SILENCE! FANTASTIC AS IT SEEMS, SIMON DRUDD KEPT GETTING YOUNGER AND YOUNGER...UNTIL HE... CEASED TO EXIST!

YOU EXPECT US TO BELIEVE A STORY LIKE THAT? WHAT DO YOU TAKE US FOR-- FOOLS?

C'MON--LET'S GET BACK TO THE STATION! WE'RE NOT NEEDED HERE ANY MORE!

MAYBE YOU WERE IN THE FREEZER TOO LONG, MAC! YOU BEGAN TO IMAGINE THINGS!

AND SO IT ENDED... AS IT HAD BEGUN... WITH LAUGHTER AND DERISION! BUT THERE IS ONE WHO BELIEVES!! ONE OTHER THAN ME! WHEREVER HE IS... SIMON DRUDD KNOWS I TOLD THE TRUTH!

NO MAN MAY TAMPER WITH LIFE! IT ENDED AS IT HAD TO END!! IT IS FAR BETTER THIS WAY!



# THE RED PIRATE!

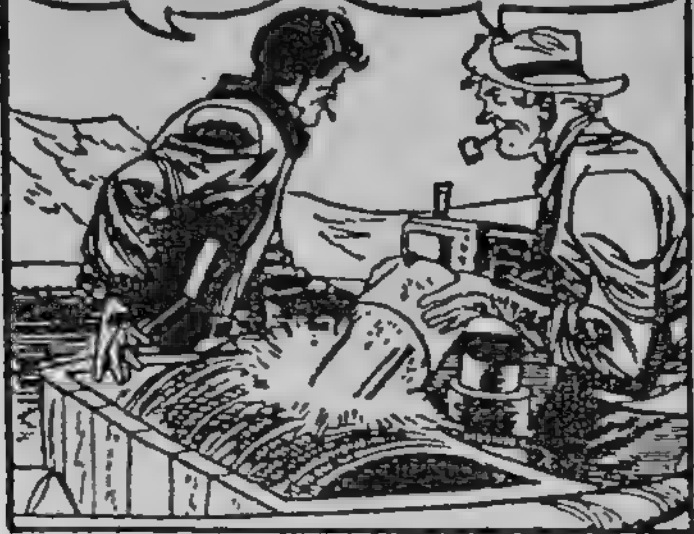




THE LINE SMOKED IN THE TUB AS THAT MONSTER SPERM WHALE WENT DOWN A MILE BELOW THE SURFACE LIKE AN ONRUSHING TRAIN...

WET DOWN THAT LINE! THAT'S THE BIGGEST I EVER SAW... OVER A HUNDRED FEET LONG!

AYE, MATE! HE'S A LONE KILLER BULL, GOOD FOR A HUNDRED AN' TWENTY BARRELS OF OIL, I BET YA!



GET THOSE MEN IN! ANY MORE SURVIVORS?

NOPE! IT WAS BAD, THOSE POOR FELLERS!



ROPE SLACKENING! LOOK SHARP NOW!

THERE HE IS... SURFACING!



THE HUGE BULK FLOATED ON THE SURFACE! WE ROWED CAUTIOUSLY TOWARD IT...

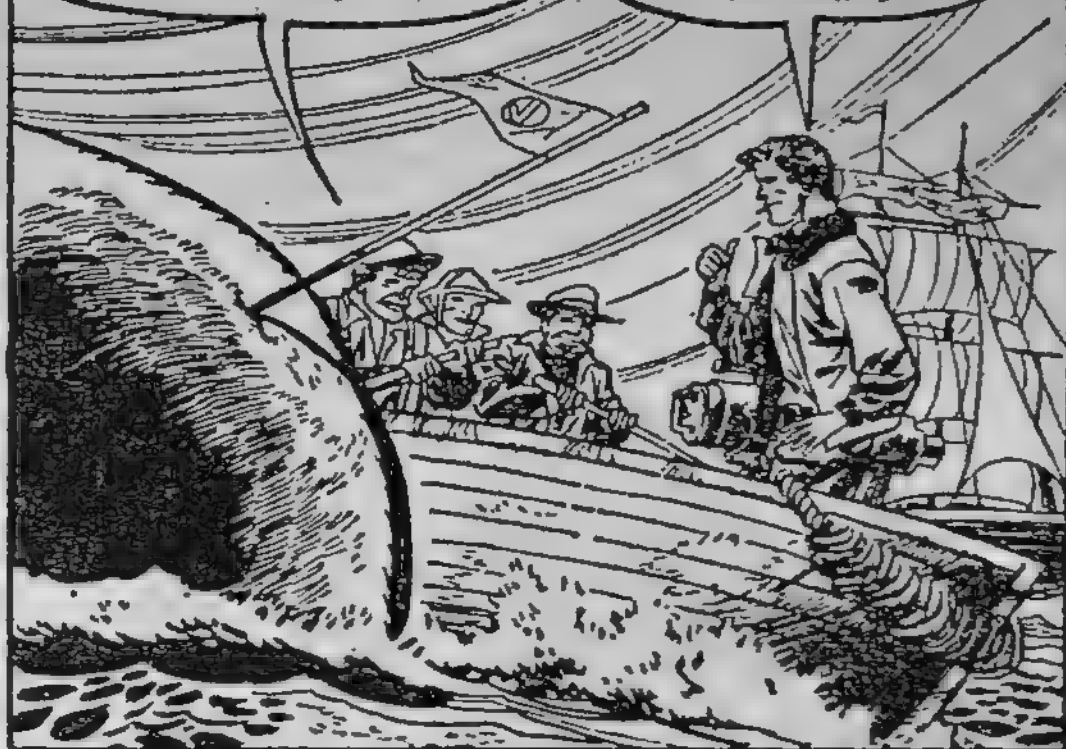
THAT SECOND HARPOON DID IT! BUT IT'S FUNNY... HE DIDN'T ROLL OR SPOUT RED!

STAND BY WITH THE FLAG!



THE CAPTAIN'S SIGNALING! THEY'VE SIGHTED ANOTHER BLOW!

FULL ASTERN AND SQUARE AWAY FOR THE SHIP!



WHALE OFF THE STARBOARD BOW! ANY SURVIVORS FROM THAT BOAT?

ONLY TWO!



THE SECOND WHALE LED US A MERRY CHASE! WHEN WE GOT OUR HARPOONS INTO HIM, HE TOOK US FOR A "NANTUCKET SLEIGH RIDE," RACING THROUGH THE WATER AT BETTER THAN EIGHTEEN KNOTS AN HOUR...



AFTER A SPRINT OF ABOUT FOUR MILES, HE SLACKENED OFF AND WE PULLED IN ENOUGH SLACK TO GET WITHIN RANGE...

THE WHALE ROLLED AND SPOUTED RED...HE WAS DONE FOR! THEN WE WAITED FOR THE "INGESBORGE" TO PICK US UP! ABOUT AN HOUR LATER, SHE HOVE IN SIGHT...



WE PULLED TO THE SHIP AND CLAMBERED ABOARD! THERE WOULD BE SERVICES FOR OUR DEAD COMRADES LATER, BUT FIRST CAME THE BUSINESS AT HAND! THE LIFE OF A WHALER IS NO BED OF ROSES...



TWO HOURS LATER, WE APPROACHED THE FIRST WHALE...

WE PULLED IN CLOSE! THE COMMIE SHIP WAS SMALLER, BUT FASTER AND MORE MODERN THAN OURS! IT SEEMED TO HAVE THE SAME-SIZED CREW...







WE WILL BOARD THEM  
AND MAKE THEM GIVE  
UP THE WHALE!

LOOK OUT! YOU'RE  
RIGHT, CAPTAIN! THE  
ONLY THING THOSE  
REDS RESPECT IS  
FORCE!

THE MEN WERE READY TO FIGHT FOR THEIR PRIZE! I  
RUSHED TO THE HARPOON GUN...



GRAB BELAYING PINS, MEN!  
STAND BY TO BOARD! WE'LL  
SHOW THIS RED PIRATE WE  
DON'T BLUFF!

THE SHIPS BUMPED! IT WAS LIKE A SCENE FROM THE DAYS OF CAPTAIN KIDD, I LAID ABOUT ME WITH MY BELAYING  
AS WE LEAPED ABOARD THE RED WHALER, YELLING... PIN! THEN I HEARD SHOTS...



LET  
'EM  
HAVE  
IT!



OUT OF THE CABIN CAME A HORDE OF  
ARMED MEN! THEY'D BEEN HIDING  
AND WAITING, AND I KNEW WE WERE  
IN FOR IT THEN!

OUR CLUBS WERE NO MATCH AGAINST  
THEIR GUNS, AND THEY OUTNUMBERED  
US TWO TO ONE...

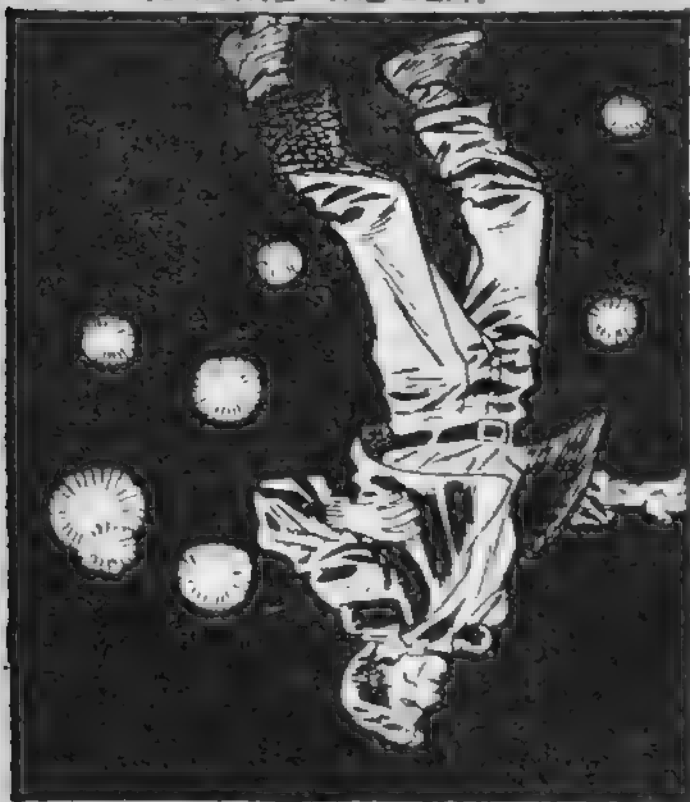
I WAS ON THE RAIL, AND  
ABOUT TO LEAP TO THE  
"INGESBORGE'S" DECKS,  
WHEN A BULLET CLIPPED  
MY SKULL...



BACK TO THE  
SHIP! BACK, AND  
TAKE COVER!



MY MUSCLES TURNED TO JELLY FOR A SECOND AND I SAW STARS... THEN I WAS PLUNGING DOWNWARD TOWARD THE SEA!



I DIDN'T LAND IN THE WATER! I SLAPPED DOWN ON THE FLOATING BODY OF THE BIG KILLER WHALE!



I STOOD UP! THE "INGESBORGE" WAS PULLING AWAY, USING HER STERN ENGINE, KEPT FOR EMERGENCIES! I COULD HEAR CAPTAIN JORGESON'S BELLOW...



THEN I FELT IT... A QUIVER THROUGH THE MONSTROUS BODY UNDER MY FEET... AND I KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED! AND I TOOK OFF FAST!



I SWAM TOWARD THE "INGESBORGE"...



AND AS I CLAMBERED UP THE RATLINE TOWARD THE WAITING HANDS OF MY MATES, I LOOKED BACK! THE RED PIRATE WAS AFTER US...



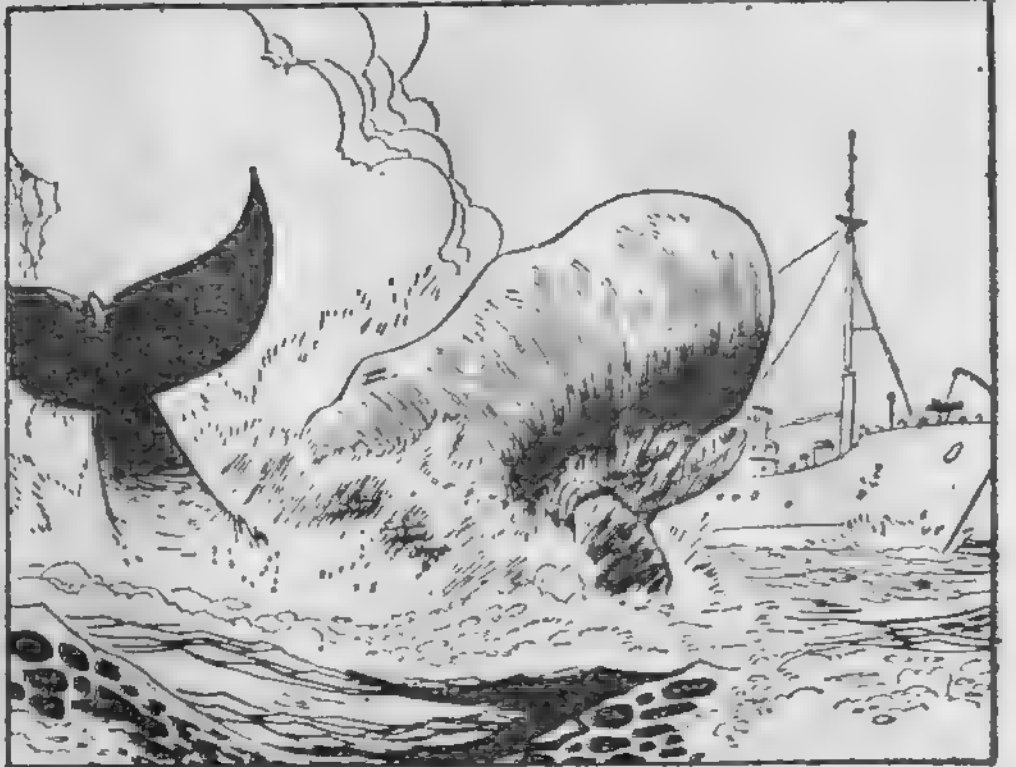




THEY'VE CRIPPLED US!  
THEY MEAN TO BOARD  
AND KILL US AND TAKE  
THE SHIP!

CAPTAIN, THAT  
WHALE ISN'T DEAD!  
**LOOK!**

THE GIANT WHALE WAS MOVING! HE SLAPPED THE WATER  
WITH HIS HUGE TAIL IN MONSTROUS RAGE...



THEN THE ENORMOUS HEAD LIFTED  
AND THE GIGANTIC SEA MAMMAL  
CHARGED STRAIGHT AT THE RUSSIAN  
WHALE!

THE CRASH WAS TREMENDOUS!  
WE COULD HEAR THE BOW OF THE  
RUSSIAN SHIP SPLINTER!

AGAIN AND AGAIN, HE HIT THE  
REELING SHIP! THEN HE SWIRLED,  
REARING UP, AND SMASHED HIS  
FLUKES FULL ON HER!



UP HE WENT, THEN SLAMMED DOWN, SMASHING THE  
WALLOWING SHIP LIKE MATCHWOOD! IT WAS THE END!  
NO SHIP COULD STAND THAT! THE RED PIRATE WENT  
UNDER WITH ALL HANDS!

WE LIMPED AWAY, HOPING THE GREAT WHALE WAS  
SATISFIED! HE FED FOR A WHILE, THEN MOVED OUT  
TO SEA...



SHALL WE STAND BY  
TO PICK UP SURVIVORS,  
SIR?

THERE'LL BE NO  
SURVIVORS! BESIDES,  
WE'RE CRIPPLED AND  
MUST MAKE PORT, BEFORE  
A STORM HITS US!



THAR HE BLOWS!  
SHOULD WE GO  
AFTER HIM?

NO! HE'S  
EARNED HIS  
FREEDOM!

AND THAT'S  
THE TRUTH,  
MATE!

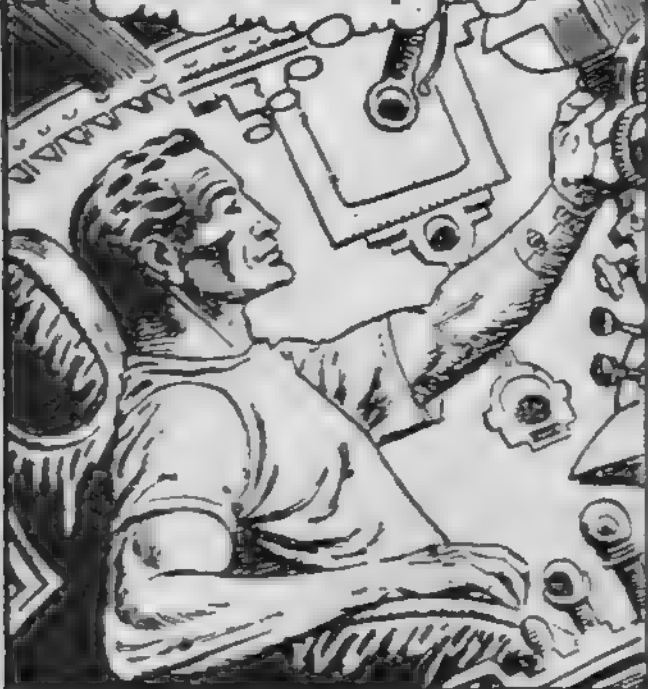
# SOMETHING LURKS INSIDE!





EXACTLY ONE YEAR AGO, I, TED KARSON, WAS THE FIRST HUMAN BEING TO BE SENT TO OUTER SPACE!

THE WORLD WILL SOON KNOW WHAT LIES BEYOND EARTH'S OWN GALAXY!



THE JOURNEY LASTED FOR MONTHS! THEN FINALLY I RETURNED TO MY OWN SOLAR SYSTEM...

HE'S JUST OUTSIDE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, BUT I CAN'T MAKE RADIO CONTACT! HE DOESN'T ANSWER!

STRANGE! HE HAS AMPLE EMERGENCY RADIO EQUIPMENT! WHY IS HE KEEPING SILENT??



I DIDN'T CONTACT EARTH BY RADIO... NOR DID I ATTEMPT TO LAND! I JUST KEPT ORBITING SILENTLY...

HE JUST KEEPS CIRCLING THE EARTH! WHY??

WHAT IF ALIENS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE SHIP, AND ARE NOW SCOUTING OUR PLANET?!

THEY MIGHT ATTACK US AT ANY MOMENT!



HURRIED CONFERENCES WERE NERVOUSLY CALLED BY THE HEADS OF STATE... AS I CONTINUED IN ORBIT!

KARSON REFUSES TO CONTACT US, OR TO LAND! HE JUST KEEPS UP THAT BLASTED CIRCLING!

HIS SILENCE IS UNCANNY... WE KNOW HE'S THERE... BUT THAT'S ALL WE KNOW!

HIS SHIP CONSTITUTES A MENACE TO EARTH! IT MUST BE DESTROYED... BEFORE IT DESTROYS US!



SOON AFTERWARDS, STILL MAINTAINING MY SILENCE, I DROPPED AN OBJECT TOWARDS MY MOTHER PLANET...

IT'S A BOMB!

WE SHOULD HAVE BLASTED HIM OUT OF SPACE!! NOW IT'S TOO LATE!

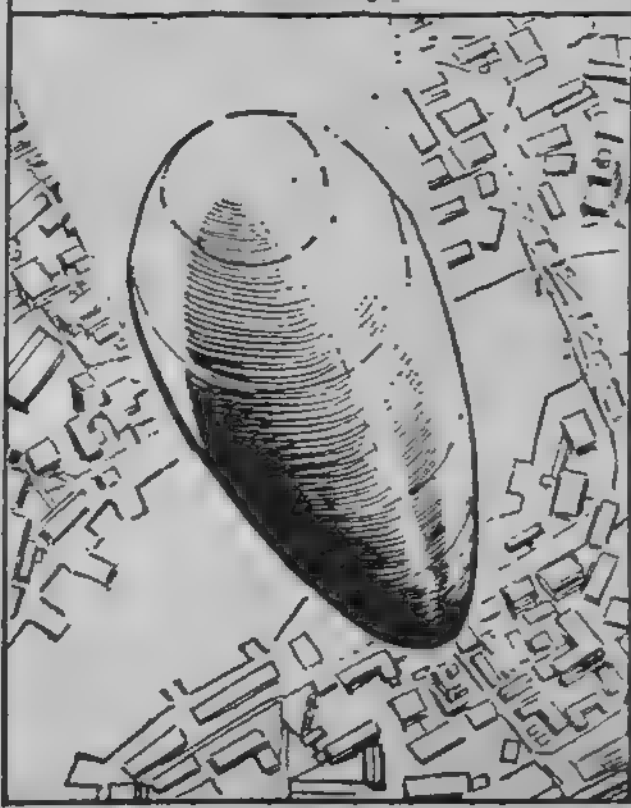
IT'S AN ATTACK! AN OPEN, UNPROVOKED ATTACK!



SECONDS LATER, EARTH'S DEFENSES STRUCK BACK!! IT WAS THE END OF MY SHIP... AND IT WAS THE END OF ME, TED KARSON!



BUT THE "BOMB", UNDAMAGED, CONTINUED TO FALL TOWARDS EARTH!



UPON IMPACT, THERE WAS NO EXPLOSION, AND CAUTIOUSLY FEARFULLY, IT WAS EXAMINED...

THIS IS NO BOMB! IT'S JUST A HARMLESS CAPSULE--AND LOOK! THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE!!



THAT "SOMETHING" WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE WORLD COUNCIL...

WHAT WAS IN THAT CAPSULE??  
ULTIMATUMS FROM THE TRAITOR?

NO! SOMETHING VASTLY DIFFERENT!  
IT'S THE FLIGHT LOG OF TED KARSON...ONE OF THE STRANGEST DOCUMENTS YOU'VE EVER READ!  
LISTEN...



"10<sup>TH</sup> MONTH OUT, ON RETURN SWING TO EARTH! I HAVE LANDED ON A STRANGE WORLD, WHICH I WILL CALL "PLANET X"!"

IT'S BREATH-TAKING!  
FRIGHTENING! AND  
THOSE WEIRD RUMBLING  
SOUNDS...WHAT CAN  
THEY BE?



THEY SEEM TO BE COMING FROM...  
**GREAT SCOTT!**



GIGANTIC SPIDER-LIKE CREATURES!!  
I CAN ALMOST  
FEEL THE HATRED,  
THE SAVAGENESS  
OF THEM! AND...  
THERE ARE  
THOUSANDS  
OF THEM!!



I-I SHOULD BE SAFE ONCE I  
LOCK MYSELF IN THE SHIP!!  
BUT I'VE GOT TO LEAVE THIS  
PLANET--FAST!



"BUT WHEN I GOT SAFELY INSIDE, I FOUND..."

MORE OF THE SPIDER-LIKE CREATURES--SMALL--  
BUT GROWING FAST! CRAWLING FROM AROUND THE  
DOOR'S RADIO CONTROL BOX??--  
HOW DID THEY GET INSIDE??  
**HOW??**







THEY--THEY'RE ALL OVER MY RADIO CONTROL UNIT! GOOD LORD! THERE'S ONLY ONE EXPLANATION! THE YOUNG TRAVEL ON RADIO WAVES-- AND WHEN THE WAVES STOP THEY BEGIN TO GROW!! UGH! ONE BIT ME!



I'LL SEAL THEM IN THE OUTER COMPARTMENT! THEY'LL PERISH FROM LACK OF AIR AND I'LL DUMP THEM OUT IN SPACE!



I BLASTED OFF THE PLANET AND TOOK CARE OF MY BITTEN ARM...

THESE DRUGS CAN STOP ANY INFECTION! NOW TO SEE IF THOSE MONSTERS ARE STILL ALIVE!



EVEN WITH THE OXYGEN GONE, THE CREATURES DIDN'T DIE, THEY MERELY STOPPED GROWING! I HAD TO FIND A WAY TO DESTROY THEM!

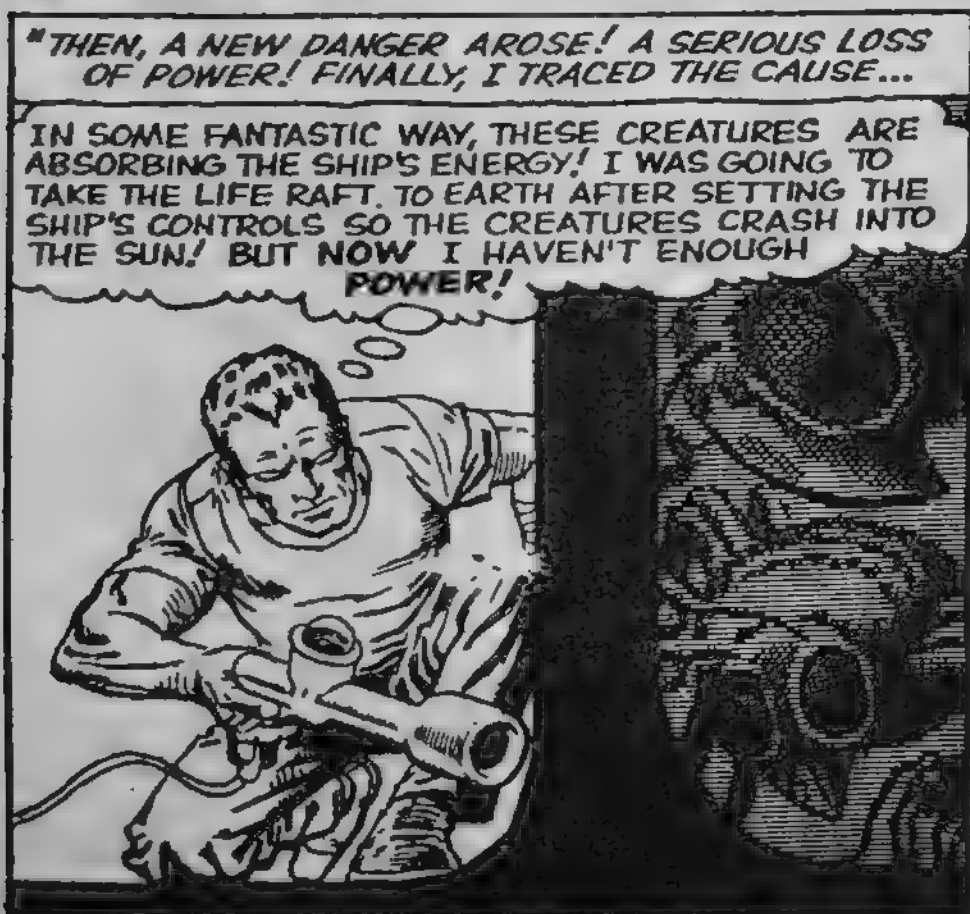
THESE EXHAUST FUMES WILL DESTROY ANYTHING THAT LIVES!!

BUT IT HAS NO EFFECT ON THEM!



NOTHING SUCCEEDED! I'VE TRIED POISONS, ACIDS, FIRE! THEY SEEM TO BE INDESTRUCTIBLE!

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ABOARD THIS SHIP THAT CAN KILL THEM! THERE MAY BE NOTHING IN THE KNOWN UNIVERSE THAT CAN DO IT!



THEN, A NEW DANGER AROSE! A SERIOUS LOSS OF POWER! FINALLY, I TRACED THE CAUSE...

IN SOME FANTASTIC WAY, THESE CREATURES ARE ABSORBING THE SHIP'S ENERGY! I WAS GOING TO TAKE THE LIFE RAFT TO EARTH AFTER SETTING THE SHIP'S CONTROLS SO THE CREATURES CRASH INTO THE SUN! BUT NOW I HAVEN'T ENOUGH POWER!



THE FINAL BLOW! EARTH'S DRUGS CANNOT CONTROL MY ARM'S INFECTION! THE TESTS REVEAL THE CREATURES, EVEN THE YOUNG ARE CARRIERS OF A HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS DISEASE! NO EARTH DRUGS CAN CURE THE INFECTION!

NOW I CAN NEVER RETURN TO EARTH!! I CAN'T ALLOW THIS DREAD VIRUS TO SPREAD AMONG MANKIND!

"THE FACTS ARE SIMPLE! I CANNOT LAND ON EARTH WITHOUT SPREADING AN UNCONTROLLABLE PLAGUE! I CAN'T EVEN TRANSMIT A RADIO MESSAGE TO EARTH BECAUSE THESE NIGHTMARE MONSTERS CAN TRAVEL ON THE RADIO WAVES, AND NO POWER ON EARTH COULD DESTROY THEM!

THESE HIDEOUS SPIDER-THINGS MUST NEVER REACH EARTH... NO MATTER WHAT PRICE I HAVE TO PAY!!



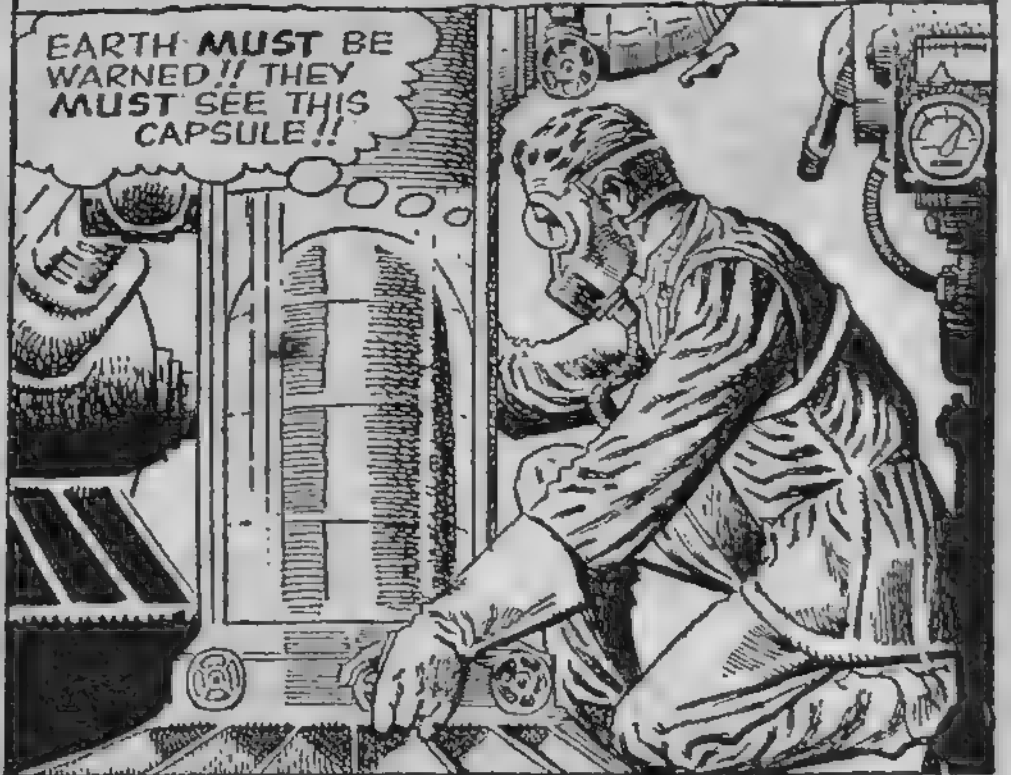
"FOR ME IT IS JUST A MATTER OF TIME, BEFORE THE INFECTION DOES ITS DEADLY WORK! BUT I MUST WARN EARTH... NO OTHER HUMAN MUST EVER LAND ON PLANET X!!

I KNOW WHAT MUST BE DONE! FIRST, A DETAILED REPORT OF ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED-- MAKING SURE THAT THE LOG ITSELF IS NOT CONTAMINATED!



"WHEN I HAVE ATTRACTED EARTH'S ATTENTION, I WILL DROP A LEAD-LINED CAPSULE CONTAINING THE LOG!

EARTH MUST BE WARNED!! THEY MUST SEE THIS CAPSULE!!



"THE CREATURES HAVE ABSORBED TOO MUCH POWER! I CANNOT LEAVE EARTH'S GALAXY! I WILL TRY TO DESTROY THE SHIP-- IF I FAIL, EARTH MUST DO IT! FAREWELL!"  
SIGNED, TED KARSON!

HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF FOR US... AND WE --WE CALLED HIM "TRAITOR"!!



NO, TED KARSON DID NOT DIE! MEN SUCH AS HE WILL NEVER DIE!!! NOT SO LONG AS MANKIND REMEMBERS! AND REMEMBER WE SHALL! WE, WHO HOLD DEAR THE LOVE OF OUR GREEN, FERTILE EARTH-- AND THE SECURITY OF OUR FELLOW MEN! FOR US, TED KARSON WILL LIVE FOREVER!



THE END



# NO ENDING!

RUN! RUN! RUN  
OR DIE! THAT  
WAS THE GRIM  
CHOICE FOR  
RODRIGO CADIZ!  
AND THIS IS HOW  
IT HAPPENED...



STORY PLOT... STAN LEE  
SCRIPT } ..... LARRY  
& ART } ..... LIEBER  
INKING..... G. BELL  
LETTERING..... ART SIMEK

NOT ALL PEOPLE ARE AS LUCKY AS WE!  
SOME, SUCH AS THESE, ARE IMPOVERISHED  
AND OPPRESSED!



BUT THEY DARE NOT COMPLAIN, FOR THEIR RULER  
IS A CRUEL AND RUTHLESS TYRANT!

LONG LIVE HIS  
EXCELLENCY!

LONG LIVE  
CADIZ!

I STEAL FROM THE  
TREASURY AND GIVE  
THE RABBLE NOTHING!  
YET THEY CHEER  
ME!

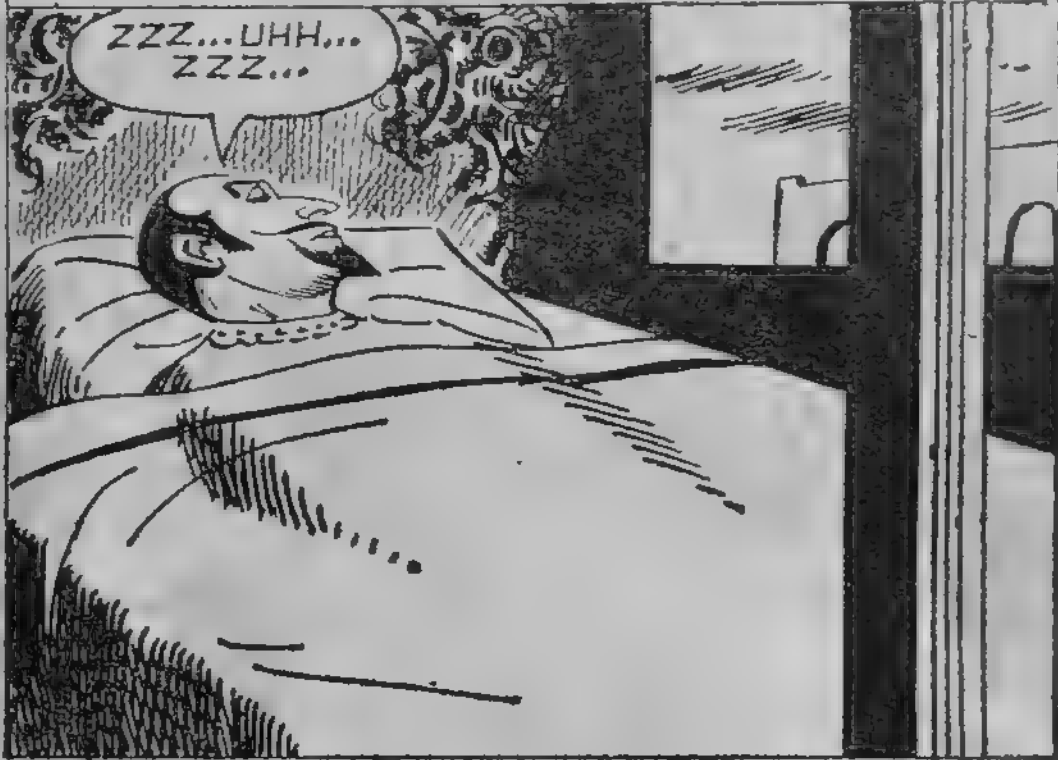


FOR THEY KNOW  
IF THEY **DON'T**  
CHEER, I WILL  
SEND THEM TO  
THE **DUNGEONS!**



BUT, FATE HAS MANY WAYS OF DEALING WITH  
EVIL DESPOTS! SOMETIMES IT IS FROM WITHOUT...  
AND OTHER TIMES FROM **WITHIN**... AS IN A **DREAM!**

ZZZ... UHH...  
ZZZ...

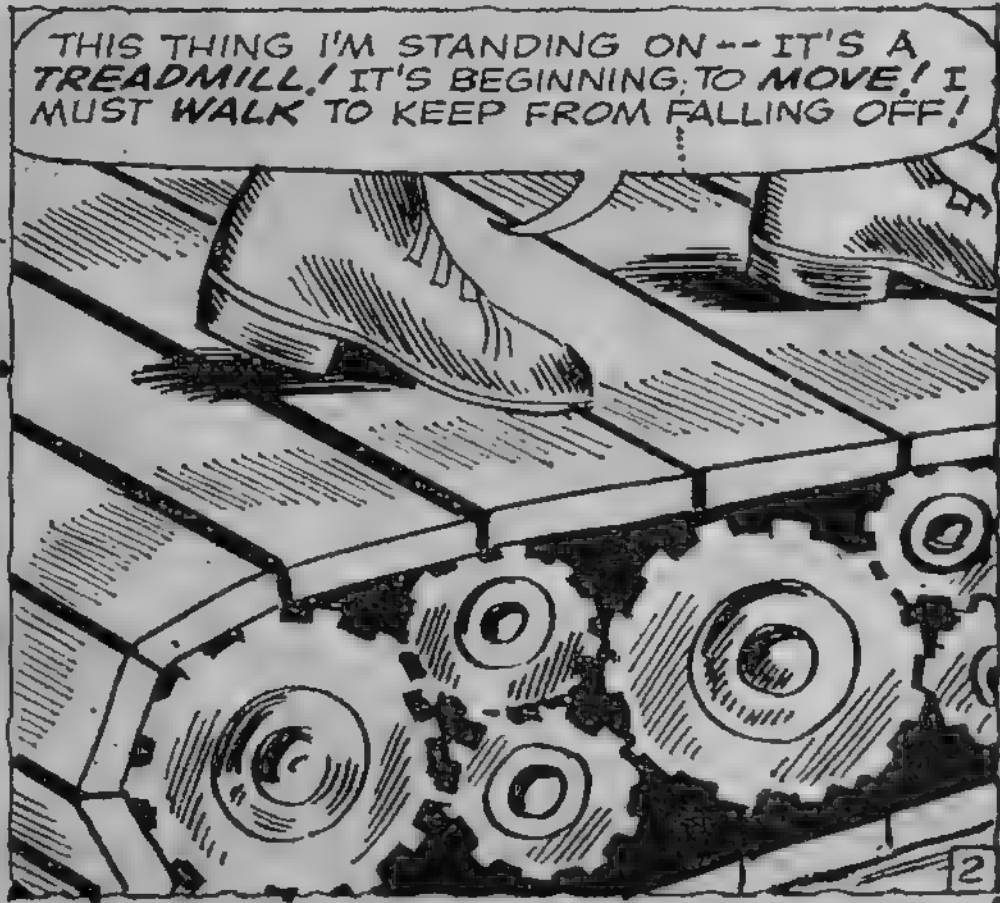


YES, A DREAM...

I DON'T KNOW HOW  
I GOT UP HERE, BUT  
I'M MILES ABOVE  
THE GROUND!



THIS THING I'M STANDING ON -- IT'S A  
**TREADMILL!** IT'S BEGINNING TO MOVE! I  
MUST WALK TO KEEP FROM FALLING OFF!







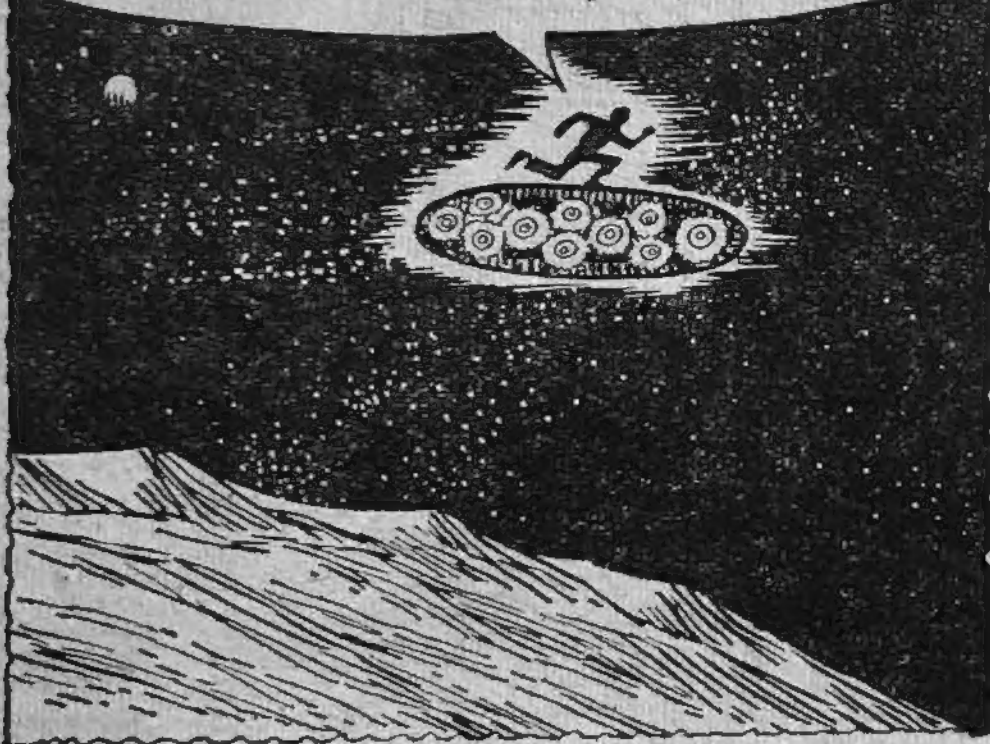


AND, THE NEXT NIGHT, THE DICTATOR'S MOST DREADED FEAR COMES TO PASS!

I'M ON THE *TREADMILL* AGAIN! AND  
ONCE AGAIN I'VE GOT TO RUN TO  
KEEP FROM FALLING OFF!



I'M GETTING TIRED! MY LEGS ACHE! BUT  
I DARE NOT STOP! I MUST GO ON--ON--  
I CAN'T LET MYSELF FALL TO THE EARTH  
BELOW!



I'M SO WEARY!  
I CAN'T HOLD  
OUT MUCH  
LONGER! I CAN'T  
...I CAN'T...



AND THEN, WHEN THE DREAMER HAS FINALLY  
REACHED THE BREAKING POINT...

IT--IT'S OVER--  
ALL OVER! I'M  
SAFE!



AGAIN, THE PALACE PHYSICIAN IS SUMMONED!

YOU MUST HELP ME! YOU MUST  
STOP THESE DREAMS!

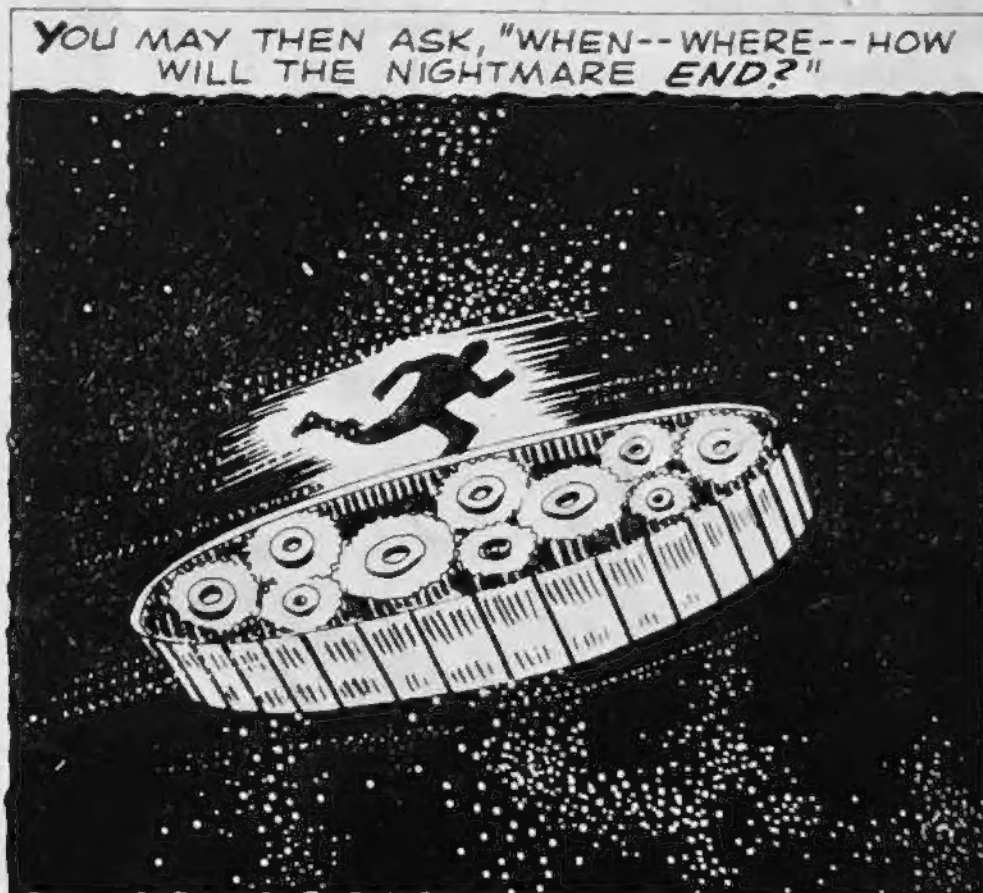
MEDICAL SCIENCE  
CAN DO *NOTHING*,  
EXCELLENCY! BUT  
CALM YOURSELF!  
THERE'S NO REASON  
FOR THE DREAM TO  
OCCUR AGAIN!



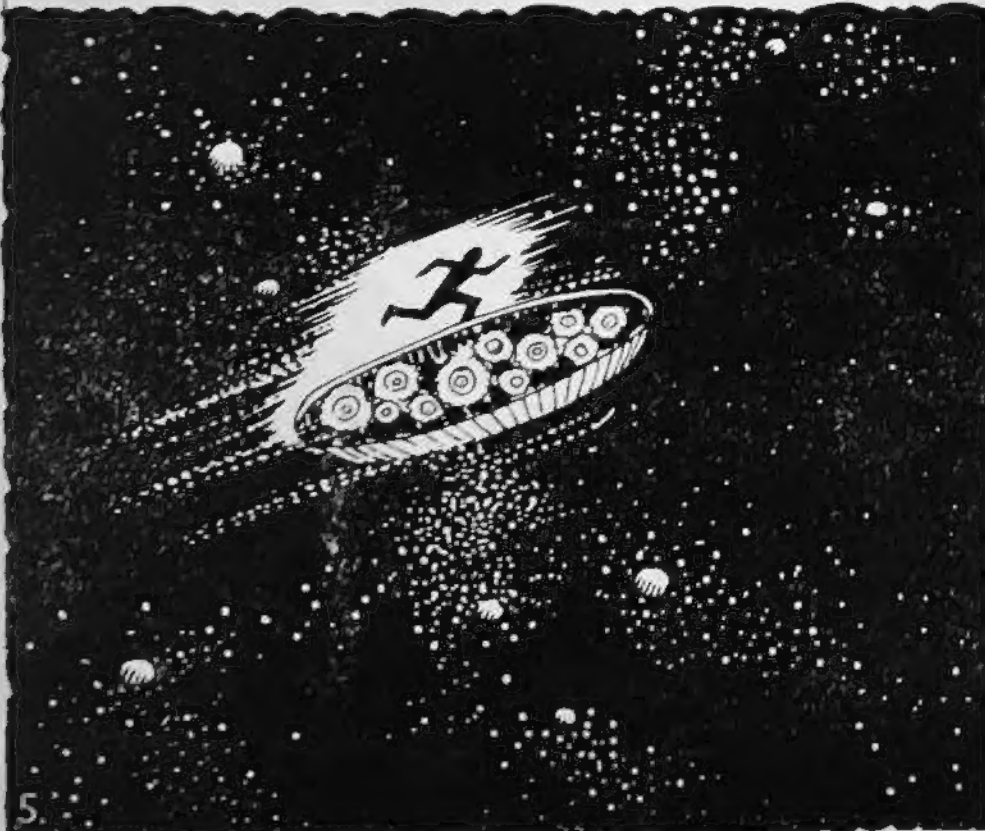




AND, AS WE TAKE OUR LEAVE OF THE DICTATOR, WE WONDER...PERHAPS IT *ISN'T* JUST A DREAM! PERHAPS RODRIGO CADIZ IS CAUGHT ON THE TREADMILL OF LIFE!



WELL, IN ANSWER, WE WILL ASK *YOU--*



...WHERE DOES A TREADMILL END???



THE END

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